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NATIONAL NEWS

A Message from the Chief

I hope your holidays were filled with family, friends and cheer and that the variable weather around the country didn’t spoil your travels. And I hope 2009 is off to a good start for you.

There were tremendous things accomplished in 2008 in the face of serious challenges from fire, budget, retirements, workforce capacity and election year politics. Still you continue to prove your credibility in sustaining the health, diversity and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands for present and future generations. And you have positioned the Forest Service well to face the challenges coming at us in this transition of administrations. This includes addressing difficult economic challenges.

I recognize that given all those old challenges, there is some angst about taking on new work. And there are others of you very excited about the opportunity for the Forest Service to be an important player in some of the things being discussed. Thank you for the feedback and comments on what you’re reading and hearing. And please help us all to be forward thinking and realistic all at the same time. We can’t be afraid to dream about what’s possible and then again, we can’t take on the entire world.

We ended 2008 with the announcement that the Secretary of Agriculture will appoint Sally Collins to lead a new agency within the Department. She will oversee the development of standards for ecosystem services markets. Many of you have been active in local or state wide discussions and in market development and you recognize how tremendous this is to have Sally lead this effort for the U.S. government. The appointment is well deserved and an exciting opportunity for her and for the Forest Service.

And with the start of 2009, I have a few announcements of my own about changes within the Executive Leadership Team.

Hank Kashdan has accepted the position of Associate Chief. Hank brings 35 years of operations and natural resource management experience to the position from all levels of the agency and I look forward to him taking on these new responsibilities. He has been a key figure in our efforts to address a new safety culture, reinvigoration of our Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers, managerial discipline, centralized services, reporting systems, work planning systems, etc. and has been critical to many of our communications with Congress, USDA, and other government entities here in Washington. Hank will be an exceptional Associate Chief.

Chuck Myers has accepted the position of Deputy Chief for Operations behind Hank. Chuck's experiences at all levels of the agency make him an excellent choice for leading our operations work. He knows how the choices we make in operations affects the work we do in accomplishing our mission. And he knows well enough the workings of government to work effectively with Congress, OMB and USDA. He will lead an excellent staff including an Associate Deputy Chief and Directors in Operations. I look forward to having Chuck's excellent leadership skills applied to our support operations.

These announcements come amidst much speculation as to what the new administration might do or might have in mind for the U.S. Forest Service. We can't help it. We love to speculate. But please keep in your hearts and minds the knowledge that we are well prepared and well aligned to take on the vision that President-elect Obama espouses. I am excited about the possibilities in 2009. Congratulations to Sally, Hank and Chuck.

Gail

Correcting Amendment to Planning Rule Published

By Regis Terney, Ecosystem Management Coordination

The Forest Service has published in the Federal Register, a technical amendment to the planning rule (Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 219—Planning, Subpart A—National Forest System Land Management Planning (36 CFR part 219)). This technical amendment was made at the request of the Federal Register's director.

The technical amendment to the 2008 planning rule transition provisions corrects an error in the reference to the "Optional Appeal Procedures Available during the Planning Rule Transition Period." Under 36 CFR 219.14 in the planning rule as it was published in the April 21, 2008, Federal Register, the responsible official could elect to use these procedures for some land management plans and amendments approved during the planning rule transition period. These appeal and review procedures, which are identified as 36 CFR part 217, were in effect before November 9, 2000. These procedures had been repealed when the Forest Service published the 2000 planning rule on November 9, 2000, and were removed from the Code of Federal Regulations in 2001.

This Federal Register technical amendment removes references to 36 CFR part 217 because 36 CFR part 217 no longer exists. However, the Forest Service is making them available in a new document. For the public's reference and use, we are putting the text of the appeal and review procedures referred to by the planning rule on our Website. These procedures will continue to be available during the transition period.

The "Optional Appeal Procedures Available during the Planning Rule Transition Period" are available at <http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/applit/includes/PlanAppealProceduresDuringTransition.pdf> .

The Federal Register notice is available at http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/includes/planning_rule/081231_correcting_amendmentPlanRule.pdf

LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES: Global Markets for Wood

Global Markets and the Health of America's Forests: A Forest Service Perspective

By Sally Collins, David Darr, David Wear and Hutch Brown

The American forest products industry has generally declined in the face of global competition.

Land, labor, and raw materials tend to be cheaper in the developing world, and fast-growing tropical trees add to the competitive advantage for Brazil and other countries.

Global demand for wood is generally flat, and illegal logging is further depressing prices. However, the United States still consumes and produces more wood products than any other country, and the forest products industry has restructured for greater efficiency.

Today's relatively horizontal structures are likely to make American industry more nimble, allowing it to capitalize on American skilled labor as well as local and niche markets for specialty products. Forest landowners could benefit from developing markets for carbon, water, and other ecosystem services, and markets for wood pellets, cellulosic ethanol, and other forms of wood energy are growing.

The U.S. Forest Service can help by developing and showcasing new techniques and technologies for gaining income from forestry and forest-related activities; by delivering a steady stream of materials from national forest land; and by promoting international efforts to suppress illegal logging.

For the full published article, click here>>> <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2008/briefings/01/markets.shtml> .

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – January 19

On January 19, Americans will observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, <http://origins.usa.gov/external/external.jsp?url=http://www.mlkday.gov/> an annual federal holiday that commemorates the [life and work of the American civil rights leader](http://origins.usa.gov/external/external.jsp?url=http://www.free.ed.gov/keywords.cfm?keyword_id=954).

http://origins.usa.gov/external/external.jsp?url=http://www.free.ed.gov/keywords.cfm?keyword_id=954 Recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize, Martin Luther King, Jr. advocated for social change through nonviolent action.

A [national memorial](#) to King is planned for construction in Washington, D.C., adjacent to the FDR Memorial and in line with the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials.

http://origins.firstgov.gov/external/external.jsp?url=http://www.mlkmemorial.org/site/c.hkIUL9MVJxE/b.1190591/k.B083/About_the_Memorial.htm

Presidential Inauguration – January 20

The 44th President of the United States will be inaugurated on January 20 in Washington, D.C. Visit <http://www.USA.gov> for information about the parade, inaugural balls, tickets to the swearing-in, transportation, and more. You'll also find resources on [President-elect Obama, Vice President-elect Biden, and their transition team](#). http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Election_2008.shtml#vgn-barack-obama-president-elect-vgn

Special Forest Products Focus of Final Rule

The Department of Agriculture is issuing a final rule governing the disposal of special forest products and forest botanical products from National Forest System land. The final rule was published in the *Federal Register* on December 29, 2008; the directives will become effective January 28, 2009.

Special forest products are products collected from National Forest System lands and include but are not limited to, mosses, fungi (including mushrooms), bryophytes, liverworts, roots, bulbs, berries, seeds, wildflowers, forbs, sedges, grasses, nuts, ferns, tree sap, boughs, bark cones, burls, transplants, pine

straw, Christmas trees, firewood, posts and poles, shingle and shake bolts, mine props, rails, vegas, bow staves, and fence material.

Forest botanical products are naturally occurring and a subset of special forest products but exclude timber products such as, but not limited to, Christmas trees, firewood, and fence materials.

These regulations will allow the Forest Service to better manage its special forest products program:

- through commercial harvest and sale
- through free use, and
- implements a pilot program to charge, collect, and retain fees for forest botanical products, pursuant to the pilot program law under PL 108-108, Title III, Section 335, 117 Stat. 1312 (16 U.S.C. 528 Note).

The rule addresses fees, bidding, sustainability, and other issues with commercial harvest and sale of special forest products and forest botanical products. The new rule reflects existing procedures and practices.

In the past, the Forest Service has used its timber sale regulations and certain parts of the Forest Service Manual and Handbook to sell special forest products. Public demand for both timber and non-timber special forest products has increased. Current regulations do not adequately address selling non-timber forest products. Given the growing demand and the need to ensure sustainability, the Forest Service feels that it is impractical to continue to rely on timber sale regulations for special forest products. Therefore, the agency has developed regulations that specifically apply to special forest products.

Historically, the Forest Service has granted limited free use of special forest products to individuals and Tribes with treaty and other reserved rights. In addition to honoring the treaty and reserved rights retained by Tribes, the Forest Service is committed to meeting their trust responsibilities with Tribes. This rule continues to recognize these rights and responsibilities. It allows for and encourages the use of memorandums of understanding and memorandums of agreement with regional and local Forest Service offices to maintain traditional cultural practices and culturally important places.

Traditional gatherers who may not be members of federally-recognized Tribes will have full access to special forest products as they have in the past. Permits will be required, however.

The rule establishes a pilot program for disposing of forest botanical products from National Forest System lands. The Forest Service's treatment of forest botanical products and special forest products differ only in the segregation of fees and different "personal use" and "free use" practices. The pilot program allows limited free use of forest botanical products and establishes a "personal use harvest level" for each product. If an individual's gathering is below the "personal harvest use levels," they don't have to pay fees.

University Analyzes Litigation Outcomes

Since 2004, the Forest Service and State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry have had an agreement under which SUNY analyzes results of Forest Service natural resource management litigation.

On December 30, 2008, the college issued a report, authored by Robert W. Malmshemer and Amanda Anderson, summarizing the results of their research

The document entitled, *Forest Service Land Management Litigation 1989-2005*, reveals that in 949 cases that were filed between 1989 and 2005 and concluded by May 15, 2008, the Forest Service prevailed in 520; lost in 203; and settled 226.

The researchers looked primarily at resource management cases involving challenges under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA.) They did not look at real property disputes, compensation claims, employment issues, FOIA/FACA cases, or cases in which the agency was a plaintiff.

SUNY used a conservative measure to determine wins and losses: if the Forest Service lost any element of a case it was counted as a loss. In order to be considered a win, the Forest Service had to prevail in every claim in the case.

Excluding cases that settled, the Forest Service's winning rate was greater than 2 to 1 (520:203).

The study concluded that plaintiffs seeking less use of National Forest System (NFS) lands and resources lost more than 50% of the cases they filed while plaintiffs seeking more use of NFS lands and resources lost more than 65% of the cases they filed. Challenges to logging and salvage sale projects accounted for the most litigation (35%.)

1991 was the year with the highest winning percentage when the agency prevailed in 72% of its cases. 2005 marked the year of its highest losing percentage when the agency lost 38% of its cases. 2004 saw the most cases filed against the agency, 82.

The research was originally funded by a McIntire-Stennis Research Grant and was continued under a grant by the Forest Service.

ABOUT US

An "Overview" of the Agency Posted Online

The "US Forest Service - An Overview" document has been posted to the Forest Service's Web site. <http://www.fs.fed.us/>

An Interview with Dawn M. Charging

By Ruth Piotrowski, National American Indian/Alaska Native Program Manager

I first met Dawn Charging, Intergovernmental Affairs Director for Native American Programs, at the orientation for the Washington Interns for Native Students (WINS) in June of 2008. I didn't know who she was at first. I just remember thinking she was an impressive woman with long flowing brown hair who wore beautiful American Indian turquoise jewelry, and carried a camera. I thought she was an official, but didn't know that she was the Director for Native American Programs in the Office of the Secretary at USDA. When she was introduced, I had to ask myself: How did she find herself in this very important role at USDA? Click here to read more>>>.

Dawn Charging was raised on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, on a small grain and cattle production ranch. She is an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes – Mandan, Hidatsa, and the Arikara Tribe. When asked about her life on the farm she spoke of long days and the hard work required to run the family ranch. She described how day-to-day life on a ranch prepared her to be an independent thinker and decision-maker. Her face lights up with a smile when she talks about family values and the hunting and fishing trips her family shared. She loves to hunt - her whole family hunts together, her mother in the lead. She stated that some tribes actually choose their leaders based on their hunting skills. When she was 11 years old, she was given the name of "Buffalo Woman" by her grandmothers in Hidatsa. Her grandmother was known as Brown Leaves and her grandmother was Corn Silk Woman, so she was deeply honored when they named her after a powerful and sacred animal, the buffalo.

During her professional career as a freelance photographer and writer, she published in local, regional, and national newspapers, magazines, books, and journals. Among her most notable credits are *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, and *In-Fisherman Magazine*. To this day, she rarely goes anywhere without a camera to capture the land, nature, and goings-on of everyday life. She went on to serve dual roles as the Communications Director/Photographer and Film Commissioner for the State of North Dakota's Tourism Department.

Charging had returned to the family ranch and was working full time for the Three Affiliated Tribes, (serving as the Director of the Tribe's Tourism and Government Services, which included being a liaison between tribal, county, state, and federal government offices) when she received several requests to run for State Legislature, in the North Dakota House of Representatives. She declined because running for office "should be the people's decision, not hers, as was customary of selecting Tribal leadership. When the filing dates past, she was approached one last time, and it was suggested that if she ran as a write-in candidate on the primary ballot, it would be the people's choice. If the people wanted her, they would write her in and if they didn't that would be their choice too. The people did speak and in January of 2005; she was sworn in as the first American Indian to serve the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation and parts of six counties in West Central North Dakota as a member of the North Dakota House of Representatives. She was extremely honored when USDA Secretary Ed Schafer called to nominate her as a potential candidate to fill the position as USDA's primary contact with Tribal Governments and their members. According to Schafer, "Dawn Charging understands the unique responsibility of the federal government to our nation's Indian Tribes. Her heritage in the Three Affiliated Tribes and her service in both tribal and state governments bring an appreciation of tribal governments and a dedication to relationship-building through mutual respect and consultation." She said that the vetting process took some time. When she arrived at the Whitten Building on April 2, 2008, she knew she had only nine months to make a difference.

When she first arrived to Washington DC, she experienced a great loneliness. Being away from the land, family and extended tribal family was not easy. It wasn't long before she found herself visiting the National American Indian Museum where she found a sense of home. What excited her about coming to Washington was that the Nations Capital is where "solutions" happen. With such a limited time, she felt challenged, but at the same time she felt empowered to make every minute of every day count. As Chairwoman of the USDA Native American Working Group, Charging worked with all USDA mission areas and agencies to help establish an official departmental regulation (Department Regulation 1350-001; Tribal Consultation, dated September 11, 2008) that strengthens requirements for appropriate consultation and participation between Indian tribes and USDA agencies on USDA policies and activities. The new policy states; "It is in the public interest that USDA should, to the extent practicable and permitted by law, consult and coordinate with tribes on a government-to-government basis. Because tribes are affected by USDA policies, programs and actions, USDA should consult with tribes on matters that may affect their rights and interests in compliance with Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, prior to making a decision."

In addition to the DR, she has been the Native voice of USDA for the rollout of the new Farm Bill. She has traveled around the United States to meet with tribes to ensure they were aware of the opportunities that are available in relation to the Farm Bill. Director Charging expressed great admiration for the work of the Forest Service, Office of Tribal Relations, and Under-Secretary Mark Rey. She cited recent actions regarding the repatriation of the remains found at On Your Knees Cave on Prince of Wales Island in southeast Alaska. These remains were found about 12 years ago and have been dated at 10,300 years old, which makes them the oldest remains ever repatriated in the United States. Terry Fifield, Archeologist on the Craig Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, and Mike Kaczor, Heritage Program Manager, National Forest System, Recreation and Heritage Resources, Recreation Management, Washington, D.C., as well as Fred Clark, Director of the Office of Tribal Relations, were at the forefront throughout the process. Director Charging stated that this Forest Service partnership was the greatest example she has ever seen of a government agency working in partnership with American Indian/Alaska Native communities. In this case, the Forest Service partnered with the communities of Klawock and Craig, on Prince of Wales Island. Local tribes, Elders, universities, museums, and scientists worked together to accommodate Tribal beliefs, as Shuká Kaa –"Man Ahead of Us" was recognized through this

unique government-to-government relationship. On September 26-27, Secretary Schafer attended the honor ceremony that celebrated the return of “Shuká Kaa” to his final resting place. She credits Fred Clark, Director of the Office of Tribal Relations, with the positive way in which the Agency engages with tribal people and communities and often uses the Forest Service as an example of how agencies should conduct Tribal Consultation. She believes that the FS Office of Tribal Relations is ahead of other federal agencies. She often encourages other agencies and USDA mission areas to contact FS Tribal Relations, as they have a pulse on Indian Country.

Charging puts in long days, but has no plans to slow down during the duration of her term at USDA, which as a political appointment ending on January 16, 2009. Where does she go from here? She is not certain, but she is secure in the knowledge that she will be where she is supposed to be. She believes, as her culture teaches, that everything happens for a reason.

Director Charging’s passion for the work she does brought a great deal to the USDA in a very short time. It was my pleasure to interview Director Charging, and appreciate the time she took to share her story with me.

Evaluating Lightning Protection on Lookouts and Communication Facilities

By Ted Etter

Unexpected lightning can raise the hair on the back of your neck, especially when you’re in a lookout.

Many Forest Service facilities have lightning protection systems. These systems need to be inspected regularly, which requires understanding how the systems work and how to identify problems.

This tech tip explains about how to perform initial visual inspections and describes the specialized tools that are needed. Additional tools are being evaluated and developed at the Missoula Technology and Development Center. <http://www.fs.fed.us/t-d/pubs/htmlpubs/htm08732333/>
(Username: t-d, Password: t-d)

Finding New Value in Our Forests

From Friends of the Forest newsletter

Dense stands of small-diameter trees pose both threat and opportunity for dozens of communities neighboring National Forests. These overgrown forests can erupt rapidly into devastating wildfires or succumb to insect outbreaks. But they also harbor potential economic benefits – through innovative and profitable uses for “woody biomass.” <http://www.fs.fed.us/woodybiomass/>

Woody biomass encompasses a forest’s trees and woody plants, including limbs, tops and needles, that are the byproducts of forest management and not typically valued. In recent years, communities and forest managers have worked to find ways to create economic value from these forest byproducts, while also returning overgrown forests to more natural, resilient conditions. Previously “unmerchantable” forest material is now being used to create furniture, engineered lumber, animal bedding, and a renewable fuel and heating source that can reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

In the process, forest communities create jobs and return their forests to a healthier, more fire- and insect-resistant state. Several NFF partners are working on biomass projects, including the Lake County Resources Initiative <http://www.lcri.org/market.html> and the Central Oregon Partnership for Wildfire Risk Reduction. <http://www.coic.org/copwrr/about.htm>

Today's Green Tips

- Buy locally. Find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food near you.
- If you use plastic grocery bags, recycle them for small trashcan liners.
- Go to your local library instead of buying new books.
- Give your family and friends the green gifts. Donate to their favorite environmental group, foundation, or organization.
- Restore your old furniture. The furniture you have now still has plenty of life left.
- Do not buy a box of holiday cards to send to friends and family, consider sending e-cards instead—it does not just save paper, it saves money.
- Use the recirculation feature in your ventilation system when the AC is on – it cools the already cool air in your car down, lowering the temps faster.
- Conserve energy by installing light sensors in meeting rooms.
- Use green purchasing by buying recycled content paper and meeting supplies.
- Encourage meeting locations that minimize travel.

NFF Announces Biomass Learning Session.

By Karen DiBari, National Forest Foundation

The National Forest Foundation will hold a 90-minute peer learning session (teleconference) on Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at 12 noon MST about Woody Biomass Utilization.

<http://www.natlforests.org>

Discussion at this peer learning session will be focused around the question of how woody biomass utilization projects can be designed and implemented to meet ecological, community and economic objectives. Please call (406) 542-2805 X13 if you'd like to participate.

National Scholars Program Applications Open for 2009 Academic School Year

USDA/1890 National Scholars Program applications are now being accepted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the 2009 academic school year. Applications from high school seniors must be postmarked no later than Feb.1, 2009, and mailed to the USDA Liaison Office at the institution of the applicant's choice.

"This program is a great partnership. College-bound students benefit from a terrific educational opportunity. At USDA, we benefit from mentoring the knowledge, talent, diversity, and skills needed for the future of agriculture," said Secretary Ed Schafer.

The scholarship program between USDA and the 1890 Land-Grant Universities and Tuskegee University expands diversity through the recruitment of talented students to public service in agriculture-related fields, including food sciences, natural resource sciences and agricultural sciences.

Since 1992, USDA has funded scholarships for approximately 451 students. USDA has hired graduates into career positions.

USDA/1890 scholarship recipients receive full tuition, fees, books, use of laptop computers and printers, software, employment and benefits for each of the four years they pursue a Bachelor's degree. For each year of the scholarship, students receive room and board provided by the partnering institutions. Students are required to work one year at USDA for each year of their scholarship.

For more information about the USDA/1890 National Scholars Program, contact Carl T. Butler, Director, USDA/1890 Programs, at (202) 205-5692 or by email at Carl.Butler@ascr.usda.gov . Additional information is also available online at <http://www.ascr.usda.gov/1890programs.html> .

The mission of the Land-Grant system is to teach, conduct research and provide outreach. The system was initiated by President Abraham Lincoln with the passing the Morrill Act of 1862. A second Morrill Act was passed in 1890 to grant freed slaves and African Americans access to Land-Grant institutions in Southern states. The passage of this bill brought educational opportunities in technical, military and agricultural sciences to the general working class population who had no other access to higher levels of learning.

USDA selects scholars based on recommendations of participating 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University. The 1890 Land Grant Institutions include: Alabama A&M University, Alcorn State University, Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Fort Valley State University, Kentucky State University, Langston University, Lincoln University, North Carolina A&T University, Prairie View A&M University, South Carolina State University, Southern University, Tennessee State University, Tuskegee University, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University and West Virginia State University.

Nineteen USDA/1890 National Scholars were selected in 2008. They were: James Campbell, III, Athens, GA; Alisha Dowd, Pine Bluff, AR; Sirrena Favors, Atlanta, GA; Carlton Harris, Monticello, MS; Gerald Harvey, III, Leesburg, VA; Kayla Hedge, Langston, OK; Raphael Johnson, Saint Joseph, LA; Alicia Joseph, Opelousas, LA; Leah Marshall, Garrisonville, VA; Michael Mathews, Dallas, TX; Leonyce Moses, Greensboro, NC; Jamarious O'Neal, Pantego, NC; Ramonda Phelps, Augusta, GA; Jasmine Rosebrough, San Antonio, TX; Victoria Henderson-Turnipseed, Denver, CO; Raeven Wallace, East Saint. Louis, IL; Justin Washington, Hot Springs, AR; Henry Winkelman, Freeburg, MO; and Karla Wooten, Clarksville, TX.

USDA News Now Online

The most recent issue of the "USDA NEWS" is now posted on the USDA Web site>>>

http://www.usda.gov/agnews_pubs.xml

A printer-friendly, color PDF version of this issue is also available at that URL.

Stories in this most recent issue include:

- "When We Leave USDA, Our Federal Records Don't Go With Us"
- "Secretary Ed Schafer's Column"
- "Notes From USDA Headquarters"
- "Employees Make These Things Happen"
- "Editor's Roundup: USDA's People In The News"
- "Profile Plus--More About: Laura Griffin"
- "(Stand-Alone) Photo Of The Unveiling Of Former Secretary Mike Johanns' Official Portrait"

Western Forestry Leadership Coalition Welcomes New Staff

By Diane Denenberg, WFLC

The Western Forestry Leadership Coalition has filled a key vacancy and added a specialist position on staff with the hiring of Dana Coelho as its new Program Manager and Marcia Patton- Mallory as Bioenergy and Climate Change Specialist.

The Coalition is a unique partnership between state and federal government forestry leaders. The Coalition is comprised of 34 members from across the West and includes: the 23 western State and Island Forest Agency Directors, and 11 U.S. Forest Service members, which include 7 western USFS Regional Foresters, 3 western USFS Research Station Directors, and the USFS Forest Products Lab Director.

A five-member staff based in Denver helps to deliver the goals and objectives of the Coalition. The Coalition's goal is to launch initiatives that position the west in public debate on the region's forest resource needs as well as maximize federal and state financial investments via partnerships across agency and ownership boundaries

Coelho will be responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating programs, policies and strategic issues. She will also coordinate activities of various task forces established to address emerging issues and conduct policy review and analysis. She has been with the US Forest Service Cooperative Forestry/Urban and Community Forestry staffs in Washington DC and is in the second year of a Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF). She has a Master's of Science in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology and a Masters of Public Policy from the University of Maryland. Her Bachelors is in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia.

Patton-Mallory is working with the WFLC as a loaned executive from the US Forest Service. Her work will focus on biomass utilization, bioenergy and climate change. Prior to her current assignment Marcia was the National Biomass and Bioenergy Coordinator for the US Forest Service. She previously held the position of the Director of the Rocky Mountain Research Station for the US Forest Service, as well as various other positions in Research and Development. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Colorado State University in Forestry, and Master of Science and Ph.D. from Colorado State University in Civil Engineering.

For more information on the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition, please visit <http://www.wflcweb.org> .

REGION 2 – Rocky Mountain Region

The Gunbarrel Fire: A Wildland Fire Use Success Story

By Gwen Ernst-Ulrich, Rocky Mountain Region

When lightning ignited timber in the North Absaroka Wilderness <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=wildView&wname=North%20Absaroka> about 38 miles west of Cody, Wyoming, on July 26, 2008, the Shoshone National Forest recognized the opportunity to manage the fire for wildland fire use.* The decision and ensuing outcome garnered the Fire Management Team a Chief's Honor Award.

Before its containment in mid-September, the Gunbarrel Fire <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/1439/> burned over 68,000 acres of mostly bug-killed trees between Cody and Yellowstone National Park, to the west.

An ongoing insect epidemic causing considerable tree mortality, its large fire history, and high visitor use make the forest a priority area for the Rocky Mountain Region's Accelerated Watershed Restoration Program. Within the program, the forest has focused on hazardous fuel reduction treatments along the heavily traveled North Fork corridor near Yellowstone Park's East Gate. Permitted lodges, recreation residences, and developed recreation facilities valued at more than \$40 million are located in the corridor.

Beginning in 2005, the forest planned and implemented mechanical and prescribed fire treatments along the corridor adjacent to structures and other resources of value, preparing the area for wildland fire use incidents. In June 2008, the Forest Plan was amended to allow natural-ignition wildfires to accomplish forest-wide resource benefits. As a result, the Gunbarrel Fire was allowed to burn inside and outside wilderness to accomplish resource benefits.

The forest's outstanding relationships with local communities and partners were also integral to success. A strong working relationship and cooperation with Park County Fire Protection District #2, which had structure protection responsibilities, were key factors in the positive outcome.

An opinion-editorial for the Cody Enterprise by Wyoming Director for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Brian Sybert, reflected the strong community support the forest received over multiple intense weeks of fire management.

“By allowing the Gunbarrel Fire to run most of its course...we have the opportunity to look back and learn how wildland fire can be returned to our national forests while at the same time taking measures to protect lives, livelihoods and property...By all accounts, the Shoshone’s philosophy has been an unqualified success – one that other national forests in the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and in the West would do well to emulate,” said Sybert.

Forest Fire Management Officer (FMO) Mark Giacoletto said the location, rough terrain, and heavy timber made the fire inaccessible to equipment and unsafe for firefighters, adding to the case for a strategy that consisted primarily of point protection of high value assets while allowing the fire to accomplish resource benefits. “This fire played its natural role in maintaining the local ecosystem,” Giacoletto said.

As with any wildland fire, firefighter and public safety was the highest priority. Much of the \$10 million spent to manage the incident went to keeping fire away from the public and private assets in the North Fork corridor.

North Zone District Ranger Terry Root noted that the cost of controlling the fire was a relative bargain compared to what it would have cost to totally suppress it. It costs about \$200 per acre to accomplish resource benefits using prescribed fire on the forest, while the average cost per acre of managing the Gunbarrel Fire was approximately \$164 per acre.

The Chief’s Honor Award for Sustaining Forests and Grasslands acknowledged the value of focused leadership, planning, and strong community partnerships in successfully managing complex forest health challenges in the Rocky Mountain Region.

http://www.fs.fed.us/fstoday/081212/02National%20News/chief_awards.html

In addition to Giacoletto and Root, team members recognized in December included Forest Supervisor Becky Aus, Assistant FMO Richard Connell (now FMO on the Flathead National Forest), North Zone FMO Clint Dawson, and Public Affairs Officer Susie Douglas. Aus believes the level of success would not have been possible without the support of all the forest’s employees.

“I am very proud of the efforts of the Shoshone National Forest and the Fire Management Team. The forest’s management approach and the Gunbarrel Fire clearly demonstrate that wildland fire use can be incorporated as a useful management tool that not only accomplishes resource objectives in restoring healthy forests but also provides for increased firefighter and public safety,” said Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Rick Cables.

**Wildland Fire Use is the management of naturally ignited wildland fires to accomplish specific pre-stated resource management objectives in predefined geographic areas outlined in Fire Management Plans.*

REGION 3 - Southwestern Region

Southwestern Region to Provide 2009 Capitol Christmas Tree

By Gilbert Zepeda, Deputy Regional Forester

The custom of placing a Christmas tree on the U.S. Capitol front lawn dates back to 1964. Since 1970, the “people’s tree” has come from a national forest.

In 2009, the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest has been given the honor to provide the Capitol Christmas Tree. The tree will come from the White Mountains of eastern Arizona. This is not the first time

that the Capitol Christmas Tree has come from the Southwestern Region. The Carson National Forest provided the tree in 1991 and the Santa Fe National Forest in 2005.

When I committed Santa Fe National Forest to provide the 2005 Capitol Christmas Tree, little did I know of the amount of effort and challenges that stood in front of us. After all, how hard could it be to find one tree and deliver it to the U.S. Capitol?

I could write pages about all the hard work and challenges that were overcome by so many people to deliver not only the Capitol Christmas Tree, but all the other parts that go along with that effort. It only took the first stop of the state-wide tour, watching adults and children stand in line to take a picture, not just of them with the Tree, but always asking for a Forest Service person in their "greens" to stand along side them to know that it had all been worth the effort.

The search is currently underway to locate the perfect 70-foot tree. Approximately 4,000 handcrafted outdoor ornaments made by school children will decorate the Christmas tree and another 1,000 smaller indoor ornaments will be donated for 75 "companion trees" that will be displayed in the Supreme Court, Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, the National Arboretum, Arizona Congressional Delegation, and other government offices.

In retrospect, for me, the biggest honor of providing the Capitol Christmas Tree was the privilege to nationally highlight what we all do, everyday of our Forest Service careers. Everyday, each one of us puts forth our best effort to provide the highest quality of goods, services, and protect the land and resources we are entrusted to manage. Collectively, we work across internal functional and geographic boundaries, adjusting our work and resources to accommodate priorities. We establish and build partnerships with external groups and work hand-in-hand towards a common goal. When we encounter challenges and obstacles we find creative solutions within our legal framework. In the end, we deliver on our promises in a way that produces the greatest good over the long term.

REGION 6 – Pacific Northwest Region

Winter Storms Create Hazardous Conditions On Washington's National Forests

As floods, avalanches and landslides threaten roads throughout the state, visitors to national forests are advised to use caution.

Some forest roads that were not closed because of snowpack now may be impassable because of downed trees and road and bridge washouts. Winter sports enthusiasts should check conditions in advance of their visits to ski, snowshoe and snowmobile. Many state highways and county roads accessing the National Forests are closed.

For statewide road information visit <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts/> or call 511 for updates.

The extent of the damage on the national forests may not become evident until the snow thaws. Following is a summary of known impacts:

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest

- Skykomish Ranger District Station is closed due to flooding.
- I-90, State Route 410 and state highways are closed blocking access to the south end of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.
- Roads to all ski areas are closed.
- Scenic Route 542 (Mt. Baker Highway) is closed at Doug Fir Camp Ground, about two miles east of the town of Glacier and snow blocks FS roads at and above Glacier.
- Scenic Route 20 leading to Baker Lake is closed east of Sedro-Woolley and Baker Lake County Road is closed. State and county roads leading to Baker Lake area have been closed due to landslides, water and debris. Forest Service roads around the lake remain under snow.

- Scenic Route 542 leading to the Mt Baker ski area is closed two miles east of Glacier due to avalanches.
- Scenic Route 9 is closed from Wickersham to the intersection of Scenic Route 542 and 9. SR 530 is closed east of Arlington and north of Darrington and all of the surrounding forest service roads remain under snow and inaccessible.

Olympic National Forest

- Forest Service Road 30 in the Soleduck Valley and Forest Service Road 2160, mile post 1.9, in the Matheny Creek area are washed out.
- The bridge at 2160 milepost 1.9 north of Quinault is washed out.

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest

- Salmon La Sac Road is closed at the town of Ronald. This road accesses a heavily used segment of the forest.
- Deer Creek Road in the Liberty area is closed.
- Icicle Creek Road is closed at the Snow Lakes Trailhead due to avalanche danger and flooding.
- Butcher Creek Road #6910 on State Highway 2 just north of Coles Corner is closed.
- State Highway 2 through Tumwater Canyon is closed from Coles Corner junction to Leavenworth due to avalanches and slides across the road.

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

- Crews currently are repairing Forest Road 90 on the south side of Mount St Helens at mile post 0.8 which was closed by a debris slide. The road provides access to the community of Northwoods and rural residences.
- Cowlitz Valley Ranger Station at Randle along US Highway 12 is closed due to rising waters from the Cowlitz River, and highway closures.

Forest Road Information

Gifford Pinchot National Forest: call 360-891-5000 or go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/>

Okanogan and Wenatchee: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/oka/>

Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs/>

Olympic: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/olympic/>

Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry

News Notes for December 2008

By Deborah Muccio, Northeastern Area State & Private Forestry

The latest issue of Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry News Notes is now available online. <http://www.na.fs.fed.us/newsnotes/2008/dec.pdf>

Stories include:

From the Director's Desk: Recipe for Success

Sustainable Operations Tip of the Month: The Art of Composting

Newtown Square Headquarters Office

Statewide Forest Resource Assessments and Strategies & Upcoming Webinars

Durham Field Office

Aviation Team Meets with Forest Health Managers to Deliver Digital Aerial Sketchmapping System

Morgantown Field Office

Plant Pathologist Writes Article on Bacterial Leaf Scorch for Buckeye Magazine

Environmental Education Program Presented at Cheat Lake Elementary School

St. Paul Field Office

Workshop Blends Diversity and Culture with Natural Resources Programs
Watershed Planning: From the Forest to the Faucet
Beetles, Bats, and Beyond: Illinois Team Encourages Urban Wood Use
Minnesota Arboriculturalists Present Award of Merit to Lisa Burban
Chicago Youth Experience Potential Careers in Conservation
Urban Conservationists Meet to Preserve Chicago's Natural Spaces
Workshop Blends Diversity and Culture with Natural Resources Programs

Rocky Mountain Research Station

Pearson Receives Deputy Chief's Award

From the RMRS's *Explorer*

Research Ecologist Dean Pearson, Missoula, has been selected as this year's recipient of the 2008 Deputy Chief's Early Career Scientist Award.

Pearson is recognized for his significant contributions to the fields of biological control, invasive species ecology, and wildlife biology.

Through a series of high-impact articles, he and his colleagues have established that host-specific weed biological control agents, which were previously thought to be safe, can substantially impact non-target species through complex food web interactions. Pearson's research is now incorporated into new biocontrol textbooks and key review papers, and has greatly increased the emphasis on agent efficacy in biocontrol research and applications.

Pearson and his colleagues have also contributed to resolving a longstanding debate in invasion biology about whether invasibility of communities increases or decreases with native diversity.

His work in wildlife biology has contributed fundamentally to understanding rare forest carnivore survey methods, denning habits, and methods for enumerating wildlife populations.

Pearson's publication output has generated a steady stream of influential papers in a range of subject areas, and his work has transitioned to progressively higher impact journals over his brief career. His work has been highlighted on the covers of *Ecology Letters* and the *ESA Bulletin*, and three of his papers have received RMRS outstanding publication awards.

Additionally, as Team Leader for invasive species research, he has developed a user friendly Web site to ensure dissemination of his research to managers and other users. He gives presentations and conducts field trips for scientists and the general public, and is currently working to develop a workshop on invasive species management. As a faculty affiliate with the University of Montana, he mentors PhD and MS students, and has just completed a book chapter for managers and the public on weed management. Dean will accept his award during a ceremony on January 14, 2009 on Amelia Island, Florida.

EAST to WEST – News from Forest Service Offices Across the Country

Football Fans Plant Trees

Football fans can turn their love of the game into a gift for our forests. Tickets for Trees is a partnership of the National Forest Foundation and StubHub – the world's largest online ticket marketplace. For every 2008-09 post-season NFL game ticket purchased, StubHub will plant a tree. These trees will be planted in proximity to cities hosting playoff games, as well as in Florida's Ocala National Forest for Super Bowl

XLIII in Tampa Bay. Fans can participate by buying their NFL playoff or Super Bowl tickets on StubHub or by donating directly to the NFF campaign.

Jamaican Forestry Department Receives Assistance with Strategic Planning

During October and early November, Ray Thompson of the Strategic Planning and Performance Accountability (SPPA) staff assisted the Jamaican Forestry Department with the development and implementation of their first 5-year Strategic Plan. The Forestry Department involved other Jamaican government agencies and nongovernmental organizations in the development process. International Programs is coordinating the USAID funded effort, and arranged the support from SPPA, which included assistance in the development of strategic plan objectives, outcomes, activities and measures.

Tour Your National Forests – Page by Page

The winter issue of the National Forest Foundation's magazine – Your National Forests – is hot off the presses. From the comfort of a chair by the fire, you can visit America's only tropical rainforest, learn why western forests are turning red, and check out Oregon's "End of the Road" in the remote Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Send an email if you'd like a free, trial issue.

WO Employees Exceed CFC Goal

According to External Affairs Officer Leslie Weldon, Washington Office employees have pledged over \$146,000 to the Combined Federal Campaign. This was 13% above the monetary goal for the office. Weldon commended the staffers, "this is a wonderfully generous effort, especially considering the state of the economy. For the benefiting charities, your efforts are more important now than ever," she said. "I'd like to publicly thank all of the key workers, event coordinators and especially you, the contributors." The 2008 Combined Federal Campaign officially ends on January 30.

REGION 3 - Southwestern Region

The Gila NF Steps Forward in Wake of Mine Job Layoffs

Because of local jobs losses in the mining industry, the Gila National Forest will be exploring potential employment opportunities with the Forest Service and will widely share this information to the public. The forest is considering hosting a job fair to provide community members with a one stop process for obtaining information on seasonal and permanent employment. The forest is also considering resurrecting the Southwest Fire Fighting Crew program as a way of providing additional job opportunities in the community.

Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry

Chicago Youth Experience Potential Careers in Conservation

The Chicago, Ill., Cook County Friends of the Forest Preserves' Restoration and Prescribed Fire Internship Program was back this fall and it was bigger and better than ever. This year the program offered seven paid internships that provided training and experience to encourage members of minority communities to pursue careers in conservation. The program includes environmental education classes, prescribed fire training, and a team-building trip to New Hampshire in partnership with the Student Conservation Association. Throughout the 12-week program, the interns contributed more than 2,000 hours of service to the Cook County Forest Preserve District removing invasive plant species, restoring badly eroded trails, and conducting several prescribed burns.

Urban Conservationists Meet to Preserve Chicago's Natural Spaces

The sixth biennial Chicago Wilderness Congress was held November 13 and was hosted by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Environmental Science and Policy. Chicago Wilderness is an alliance of organizations that champions biodiversity and its contribution to the quality of life in the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Chicago metropolitan region. Northeastern Area Natural Resources Specialist Tom Dilley co-chaired the Congress' planning committee with Johanna Garsenstein from the Land Trust Alliance. Lisa Burban, Forest Resources Group Leader in the St. Paul Field Office, moderated sessions on invasive species, urban forestry, and native plantings.

Workshop Blends Diversity and Culture with Natural Resources Programs

The Northeastern Area Civil Rights Committee is sponsoring "Dialogue on Diversity" workshops for Northeastern Area staff in all field locations, Grey Towers, and Newtown Square. The goals of the workshops are to build awareness and understanding of diversity and culture as well as develop actions to increase program participation by diverse audiences. The workshop covers topics such as why outreach is important and critical to program effectiveness; an overview and background on the value of diversity; developing a sense of personal cultural awareness; and understanding culture, particularly that of the Forest Service, and how this culture can positively or negatively impact our ability to work with diverse groups.

Watershed Planning: From the Forest to the Faucet

Teri Heyer, St. Paul Field Office watershed planner, hosted a Webinar about the "From the Forest to the Faucet" project for The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) agricultural watersheds learning group. The Nature Conservancy is interested in overlaying the results from this analysis with their Upper Mississippi River Basin conservation priorities for freshwater biodiversity in order to target TNC projects. TNC is particularly interested in the Meramec watershed west of St. Louis, Mo. This area is receiving attention by many organizations, including the Northeastern Area and the Missouri Department of Conservation, due to its high level of biodiversity and its proximity to a major metropolitan area.

Beetles, Bats, and Beyond: Illinois Team Encourages Urban Wood Use

Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry is among a long list of partners on the Illinois Emerald Ash Borer Wood Utilization Team. The team is seeking uses for ash trees felled by the emerald ash borer, and helps assess urban timber potential and ways to safely fell trees as marketable saw logs. The team was funded in 2007 by the Wood Education and Resource Center of the U.S. Forest Service and consists of 13 federal, state, and industry leaders who support a wider network of over 100 stakeholders—urban foresters, wood processors, municipalities and other landowners, green builders, economic development organizations, and consumers committed to finding productive uses for Illinois urban wood.

Minnesota Arboriculturalists Present Award of Merit to Lisa Burban

Lisa Burban, Forest Resources Group Leader in the St. Paul Field Office, was recently honored with the Minnesota Society of Arboriculture 2008 Award of Merit. This award recognizes a single major contribution to the field of arboriculture or urban forestry. Lisa was recognized for her dedication and leadership in the field of community forestry on the national, regional, and State levels.

Plant Pathologist Writes Article on Bacterial Leaf Scorch for Buckeye Magazine

Morgantown Plant Pathologist Al Iskra has recently written an article on bacterial leaf scorch (BLS) for the monthly magazine The Buckeye. The article will appear in the January 2009 issue. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources will use this article as an educational tool when they start their BLS statewide survey in 2009. The Northeastern Area is supporting statewide surveys for BLS. Many States in the North East as well as two diagnostic laboratories are cooperating in this multiyear survey that will delineate the occurrence of BLS throughout the States. BLS occurs in many tree species, including oaks, elms, maples, American sycamore, flowering dogwood, and white mulberry. Oaks in the red oak group, such as northern red and pin oak, are mostly affected.

Look for Grey Towers in Travel and Leisure

Milford, Penn. will be featured in the March issue of Travel and Leisure magazine. Grey Towers will be included in the story.

Selected LEI Reports

REGION 3

Lincoln NF - An LEO and an SA were involved in the investigation of an ARPA case on the **Smokey Bear RD**. The investigation was completed when the suspect (in his early 90's) turned over pots and other artifacts, with an estimated value of \$80,000, to the FS. The artifacts will be displayed at the District and Supervisor's Office.

REGION 4

Humboldt-Toiyabe NF - An LEO on the **Spring Mountains NRA** responded to a request by Las Vegas Metro Police to locate a man who called 911 to report he was lost. LEO's found the man who stated that he had escaped from a group of people who were holding him against his will at an AA camp on the Forest. The man stated he paid \$60 to be freed from his sins and alcohol abuse. An interview with the man disclosed that numerous illegal immigrants were taking part in the AA camp. Las Vegas Metro Police's HART team (Hispanic America Resource Team), which specializes in the prevention of exploitation of Illegal immigrants in the Las Vegas Area, was contacted. The HART team is continuing the investigation.

Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF - On 12/20, an LEO pulled into a parking lot at Brighton Ski Resort and observed two males smoking marijuana in the vehicle next to him. Contact was made and citations were issued.

On 12/28, an LEO/K9 team was requested to assist Utah HP personnel during a traffic stop after consent to search was given. The K9 alerted and two pounds of black tar heroin were found in the shoes of the female occupant of the vehicle. A pound of the heroin was melted into each of her shoes. The woman was arrested by the Utah HP.

REGION 6

Deschutes - Ochoco NF's - Throughout early December, LEO's from the Central Oregon Enforcement Zone participated in the "Shop with a Cop" program with officers from other law enforcement agencies in the Deschutes County area. FS LEO's took six elementary school children to Wal-Mart to shop and enjoy a meal provided by McDonald's. Each child was given a gift card to spend on family and friends. This program is offered throughout the country to assist economically disadvantaged families.

REGION 8

Cherokee NF - On 12/20, LEO's on the **Watauga RD** received a report from the local SD about a reckless driver near Roan Mountain. A second call stated that the vehicle had just collided with a bridge and the driver was leaving the scene. The LEO's located the vehicle where it had left the roadway and was teetering over a rain-swollen creek. They located the uninjured, but highly impaired, driver and held him until a Tennessee HP trooper arrived. The driver was found to be in possession of a large number of Valium pills and was arrested by the trooper for DUI. The vehicle had extensive damage on both sides with paint transfer from several as yet unknown sources.