



# Success Stories

## Superior Aviators Reach New Heights in Safety

Small aircraft have played a significant role on the Superior National Forest in fire detection and transporting initial fire attack crews for nearly 75 years. In 1983, the Superior's Ely Aviation Unit received recognition from the Region 9 Regional Forester for 20,000 flight hours without an accident.

Barring a reversal this year, the Unit is on course to achieve another notable milestone of 50,000 hours in the air without a mishap.

The core of the team is comprised of three full-time pilots, one seasonal pilot, and a full-time aircraft mechanic. Each of the Superior's three DeHavilland Beavers is averaging 320 flight hours per year.

Gary Brown inherited the incident-free record when he became the Superior's Fire Management



*The DeHavilland Beaver is the latest model of aircraft used on the Superior NF*

Officer two years ago. Brown attributes the success to a long line of skilled pilots, and the overriding emphasis placed on safety.

"It's a testament to this outfit's culture of concentrating on safety," Brown said. "The credit for this goes to everybody who's been involved, top to bottom, going all the way back to the sixties."

Brown cited the current pilots' professionalism as a big factor in maintaining the safety record.

"They are an extremely dedicated group who use every opportunity they can get for training," he said.

For more than 36 years, Forest Service pilots have compiled an exceptional safety record on the Superior. This Eastern Region success story is a direct reflection of the agency's commitment to accomplishing its work while keeping a strong emphasis on safety.

### Inside:

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## Wild New Hampshire Visits White Mountains



*The Wild New Hampshire film crew recently spent time shooting an upcoming episode for an upcoming public television program on the White Mountain NF.*

“We’re gonna roll, wait till I say ‘Action!’”

New Hampshire Fish and Game—along with New Hampshire Public Television—developed an innovative television program designed to capture wildlife that many never see, introduce people whose lives are deeply connected to the natural world, and transport viewers to remote destinations in the Granite State.

It was all a part of the highly acclaimed “Wild New Hampshire” program that recently paid a visit to the White Mountain National Forest.

Using the Forest as a natural, breathtaking background, a Fish and Game film crew gathered along the banks of the Swift River on a recent March day.

The relatively mild but windy day provided a perfect backdrop to the brilliance of the mountains,

the crackling of the frozen rivers and the expansive landscape.

The segments filmed focused on sharing information about nature, hunter safety, history of the American Indians who once lived in the area, as well as a bit of cross-country skiing and a glimpse of wildlife.

The host of the program skied down the Lower Nanamocomuck trail for several takes, and the Forest Conservation Education specialist coached him in pronouncing “Kancamagus” and “Nanamocomuck,” both American Indian names that visitors often struggle with.

Although filming this program for only a year, Fish and Game Outreach Specialist Ann Hewitt said the crew has captured many diverse aspects of the White Mountains.

“Our crew has been all over the state filming everything from backyard bears to bats, winter ice angling communities, wardens, State Parks, history, artists, and a whole lot more,” she said. “It’s amazing to see these guys work. To be at this end of the camera in less than perfect conditions at times, then see the final product, is more than rewarding.”

The White Mountain NF is an available safe haven for wildlife in New Hampshire and a small part of Maine. Employees work to maintain a healthy forest that provides various habitats and keep visitors satisfied and coming back year after year.

In caring for the habitat, the forest has a close relationship with those that take care of the wildlife and were happy to be asked to support the “Wild New Hampshire” concept, and to now take part in one of the episodes.





# Chippewa Bike Trail Nears Completion

The Chippewa National Forest's Cass Lake Area in Northern Minnesota has a new paved bicycle trail in the neighborhood. Phase Three of the Mi-Ge-Zi Bike Trail was recently completed, and provides many more miles of scenic paved trails to stroll, run, and ride on!

The idea of the soon to be legendary Mi-Ge-Zi Bike Trail is the brainchild of recreation employees on the Chippewa NF who recognized that recreational bicycling had grown in popularity nationwide throughout the last decade.

Forest Service employee Jack Gustafson—who has since retired—shared his paved trail idea with others and received positive feedback from both Forest Service employees and the public. Knowing there was insufficient funding in the Chippewa NF trails budget to pay for a trail of this magnitude, Forest personnel strategized and set aside a portion of the allocated budget while working hard to compete for grants.

Ann Long-Voelkner and Dennis Parker were instrumental in writing competitive grant applications and making presentations of the conceptual plan at political and civic meetings in the area.

Many people grew excited about how this potential trail could improve recreation opportunities on the Forest. A contest to “name the trail” was held. Traci Cloud, information officer in the Chippewa Supervisor's Office, submitted the top name with “Mi-Ge-Zi,” which means “eagle” in the Anishinabe language. The name seemed very fitting, when considering the large populations of Bald eagles common in the area and the Native American heritage present.

But before any shovels could break ground—in keeping with the National Environmental Policy Act—the Cass Lake Ranger District was required to complete an analysis to ensure there would be no significant environmental impacts.

The Environmental Assessment Team, led by forester Terry Gallagher, determined that with a few mitigation measures to the original design, this trails project could have a positive benefit to the public, while not impacting sensitive wildlife and plant species or area watersheds. Cass Lake District Ranger Bill Stocker signed the Decision Notice for the project on February 18, 1993.

The project was to be completed in four phases. Phase One involved the construction of a fully-accessible trail through the Norway Beach Complex, connecting each of the four campgrounds to the Visitor Center, Beach, and Picnic area. This 2.3-mile segment was completed in 1995.

A couple years after Phase One was completed, the Minnesota Department of Transportation—in cooperation with the City of Cass Lake—constructed a two-mile bike/pedestrian trail adjacent to State Highway 371 linking the Cass Lake to the new Cass Lake High School south of town.

Phase Two of the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail project brought the trail from the Norway Beach Recreation Complex west along the Highway 2 corridor to the City of Cass Lake. This three-mile segment was completed in 2000, thanks in part to a Regional Trails Grant from the State of Minnesota and the National Trails Fund. In its opening year, this segment had an average use level of about eighty people per day in the summer months.

In 2001, Cass County—as a partner in the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail—constructed a bike lane eight-tenths of a mile long just outside the Forest boundary in tandem to a road reconstruction project near Highway 371. The completion of this section provided a safe southern link from the Heartland Trail to where the third phase of the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail would commence at the Forest Boundary. Funding for this work was provided from a 1998 Transportation Equity Act, known as TEA-21, Public Trails Project Grant for trail construction in Cass County.



*The Mi-Ge-Zi bike trail on the Chippewa NF is attracting bicycle enthusiasts at a growing rate.*

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## Hoosier Firefighters Tackle Tanker Blaze



*Hoosier firefighters responded to an accident involving a tractor trailer that overturned and burst into flames, igniting a small brush fire.*

On Monday, March 10, the Indiana Interagency Coordination Center on the Hoosier National Forest heard the 911 report of an explosion on State Road 64 in Crawford County. Dispatchers monitored the Crawford County traffic to determine exactly what was taking place.

Approximately five minutes after the 911 call, the English Fire Department arrived on the scene of a fully loaded tanker carrying LP gas on fire and a wildland fire on both sides of State Road 64.

The Hoosier NF fire program and the English Fire Department have developed an excellent working relationship over the years. These ties led to the Chief's request for the Forest Service to respond to the wildland fire, so the fire department could concentrate on the tanker truck.

Hoosier NF FMO Chris Peterson, Law Enforcement Officer Donald Kidd, Hoosier NF Engines 41, 42, and 22 responded with 10 firefighters to the scene. Peterson was directed by English Fire Chief Mike Benham to tackle the wildland fire.

Within an hour, the Hoosier NF team had quickly contained the nine-acre fire.

HOF Engine 22—with five firefighters on board—was sent to the English Fire Department to stage for the remainder of the day to cover initial attack. HOF Engine 41 was released to cover the interagency center in Perry County, while HOF Engine 42 remained on the scene, due to the engines' Compressed Air Foam Capability (CAFS).

An Incident Command Post was set up with the operation running under Unified Command.

Agencies involved were the Forest Service, Indiana State Police, Crawford County Sheriff's Office, English Fire Department, Marengo Fire Department, Birdseye Fire Department, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Red Cross, Crawford County EMS, Life Flight, and the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Through effective interagency training and planning efforts, the management of this accident scene and adjacent wildfire went off without a hitch and—more importantly—without injury to any bystanders or emergency responders.





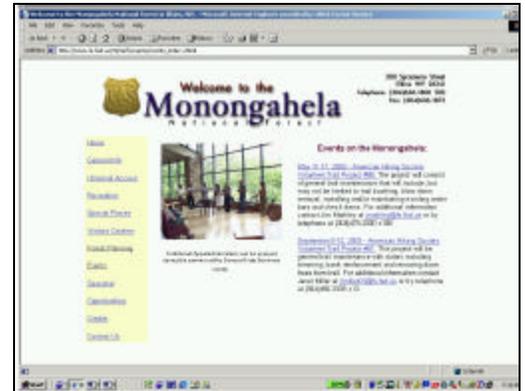
## Forest Website Receives Seal of Approval

The Monongahela National Forest website has received the MyReportLinks.com Books Seal of Approval. This seal is awarded to sites that are deemed to be especially valuable to students who are doing research for school reports.

According to their Internet specialist, MyReportLinks evaluates websites with a team of editors. Sites that they select for inclusion must meet a number of criteria, of which the most important are accuracy, high quality, and suitability for students.

The Monongahela site will now be featured in both the both books and websites of the group. The Forest has also been invited to display the seal of approval on its webpage.

“We’re proud of the work we put into our site,” said Forest Public and Legislative Affairs Officer Kate Goodrich. “A lot of people work together to make this happen, from all the employees who send in updates or corrections to the webmaster, Johnette Totten, who makes sure it looks good and works well. Only two sites in West Virginia are currently recognized with this seal, so we’re particularly pleased by the honor. As we update the site to a new look in the near future we’ll try to maintain the quality that resulted in this award.”



*The Monongahela NF’s internet website has received the MyReportLinks.com Books Seal of Approval.*

## Diversity Days Benefit Relay For Life on the Hoosier



*Dale Newell plays Irish ballads at a diversity luncheon on the Hoosier NF.*

“It started as a fun idea to raise some money for our Relay for Life team,” said Kelly Weigel, who serves—along with her husband, Dale—as chair of the Social Club on the Hoosier National Forest. “We thought we could learn about foods from different cultures, have monthly luncheons, and raise a few extra dollars each month for our team.”

Since that time, the Forest has hosted a diversity lunch every month. “We just finished a Greek lunch this month. Last month was Irish,” she said. “We had special entertainment for that one. Dale Newell was over from the Wayne and played Irish ballads on his violin while we ate our lunch.”

The Forest votes each month on what to try the next. Once decided, people bring in cookbooks and print recipes off the Internet and sign up to bring different exotic dishes. Those that don’t cook can pay the social club and still enjoy the cuisine. That’s where the fund raising comes in. Weigel estimates about half the people who come bring an exotic dish, while the rest pay. Even those who bring in a dish are asked to contribute \$1 to the Hoosier’s Relay for Life Team.

Weigel said it’s been an educational experience for all involved.

“We talk about the foods, the countries, our ancestors who may have come from there, and we just enjoy being together to celebrate life’s diversities,” Weigel said.



## Mi-Ge-Zi Bike Trail Moves to

*Continued from Page 3*

In Summer 2002, Phase Three of the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail was completed. This 6.2-mile endeavor would not have been possible had it not been for several successful partnership grants with the State of Minnesota Trails Program, Cass County—in partnership with the Federal DOT—and the Federal Department of Transportation through the TEA-21.

This Phase Three segment includes a 120-foot long boardwalk over a wetland area built in-house by engineering technicians and wildland firefighting crews. The completion of this segment creates a great loop route for users to travel, while also providing an access route to the Heartland Trail and beyond. The North Central Minnesota Regional Bike Trail System currently has in excess of 150 miles of paved Bicycle Trails.

Completion of the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail has not been without challenges.

Forest personnel and partners involved with the Trail have exchanged what could have been potential trail problems into a “better than before” final product. For example, a trans-continental pipeline loop needed by Enbridge Energy Company, Inc., was slated to tear up a good portion of the Cass Lake to Norway Beach paved Phase Two segment, in addition to altering the natural screening provided by trees and vegetation between the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail and Highway 2.

Following on-site meetings with representatives from Enbridge and with the addition of a few key construction mitigation measures, the final design and construction resulted in a better trail in the end. In addition to their willingness to work with the Chippewa, Enbridge Energy Company, Inc.—as a gesture of goodwill—purchased a crucial plot of land, constructed a paved parking lot, landscaped the site, and then donated the facilities to the City of Cass Lake to serve as a trailhead for the Mi-Ge-Zi Trail.

The Mi-Ge-Zi Trail through Phase Three, has been completed over a seven-year time span which involved the cooperation and support of several entities. Planning is underway for a spring dedication to celebrate the work that has been completed and to recognize those that made it happen.

The fourth phase, planned from Norway Beach to Knutson Dam to the north, is now in the initial planning stages.

Our future goal for the Mi-Ge-Zi Bike Trail is to connect it to the Great River Road—which follows the Mississippi River—northeast of Cass Lake, and expand the trail westward to possibly tie into the Mesabi Paved Bike Trail that is currently nearing completion.

From the scenic lakes to the towering pine forests of northern Minnesota, we welcome you to come, experience, and enjoy the Mi-Ge-Zi Bike Trail.



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