

San Juan Public Lands People



Employee News San Juan National Forest San Juan Field Office-BLM Fall 2005



Photo by Ann Bond

SJNF employee Becca Smith of Pagosa Springs unloads a weary traveler.

San Juan Employees Help Pets Rescued from Flood Waters

By Ann Bond

DURANGO - It's not every day a huge charter jet lands at the La Plata County Airport, and still more unusual when the passengers are all canine and feline. About 80 dogs and a handful of cats arrived in Durango this fall from Louisiana animal shelters, where they had been housed since being rescued from floodwaters in New Orleans.

Some 40 volunteers with the La Plata and Pagosa Springs Humane Societies and Dogster's Spay and Neuter Program (DSNiP) greeted the weary travelers with water, treats, new collars

and leashes, medical care, and best yet, foster homes.

Dogs ranged from Chihuahuas to rottweilers, poodles to pit bulls, and puppies to senior canine citizens. One by one, each was escorted by a volunteer handler through stations where veterinarians donated medical services, including microchipping, physical check-ups, worming, heartworm tests, and inoculation.

Volunteers photographed the animals and loaded pertinent information onto computers for posting on the Petfinders Web site, where, hopefully, their owners will be able to locate them. Pets that needed a little sprucing up were bathed onsite.

Foster families from Pagosa Springs to Telluride whisked the creatures off to the comforts of home, as soon as medical care and identification procedures were complete.

(Ann Bond is San Juan Public Lands Public Affairs Specialist and a volunteer with DSNiP.)



Photo by Ann Bond

SJNF employee Laurie Robison of Bayfield readies a dog for medical attention.

San Juan Public Lands People

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San Juan Employees Donate to Disaster Victims

The Durango Federal Employees Association held an ice-cream social and fundraiser this fall to benefit hurricane victims along the Gulf Coast. San Juan employees donated \$407, which was matched by \$250 from the Association, plus an additional gift of \$65, for a total of \$722. The money was donated to the American Red Cross to be used to help Hurricane Katrina victims.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Photo by Stephanie Odell

Bye to the Beabs

By Ann Bond

DURANGO - Paul Beaber, Land Surveyor/Realty Specialist, has retired after 27 years with the SJNF.

Paul started his career as a temporary survey technician, and obtained his Colorado survey license in 1987. Along the way, he worked for Goff Engineering/Surveying in Durango, and for the Bureau of Reclamation at Glen Canyon Dam in Arizona.

Paul surveyed and marked more than 350 miles of National Forest boundary. He was the Forest lead for 10 land exchanges, seven large land purchases, acquisition of 20 right-of-ways for USFS trails and roads across private lands, and resolution of some 50 title-claim cases for homes built on NFS land after erroneous private surveys.

Highlights of his career include helping to consummate the Becket Land Exchange, Hidden Valley Acquisition, Lizard Head Purchase, and Piedra Valley Purchase.

Paul's also proud of acquiring a right-of-way to improve safety on the West Dolores Road, and surveying and preparing the legal description for access to the Ansel Hall Pueblo.

Paul and his wife, Mary, will be spending most of their time in Silverton in their 1874 family home.

They plan to backcountry ski, hike, and help with a local nonprofit "quiet-use" club. When the Beabers need a break from the mountains, you'll find them in southeast Utah.

Burke's Gone Fishin'

By Ann Bond

DURANGO – Mike Burke has retired after 25 years as SJNF Geotechnical Engineer.

Mike is known for encouraging the use of alternate materials. He designed a retaining wall on Stoner Mesa Road of straw, manure, fertilizer and soil. He also designed retaining walls for forest roads constructed with recycled tires.

Mike worked on slope stability, retaining-wall design, construction materials, and project inspections. He evaluated geological hazards prior to ski area development, timber sales, and pipeline construction. He also worked on stream-bank stabilization.

Early in his career, Mike worked for a Grand Junction engineering firm, after receiving a geological engineering degree from the Colorado School of Mines. He also worked ski patrol at Snowmass Ski Area, after graduating with a philosophy degree from the University of Maryland.

Mike and his wife, Sandy, who works in the Fort Lewis College Library, have three children. William, 27, is a playwright and director in San Francisco. Cody, 25, is working on a graduate degree in Australia. Darcy, 21, is studying creative writing in Boston.

Mike plans to work part-time in engineering to leave time for music, camping, and travel. He plays the mandolin, fiddle, guitar, and bouzouki, and serves on the Durango Bluegrass Meltdown Board of Directors.



Photo by Sandy Burke



Photo by Ann Bond

Mick's the Man

By Ann Bond

DURANGO – Mick Romero started working for the SJNF in 1993, and has worked every field season as a temporary employee since then, with the exception of the 2000 field season.

At 80 years of age, Mick puts in 40 hours a week, always with a smile on his face.

"I keep things looking neat. It keeps me pretty busy," he explains. "Everyone here is really nice."

No job is too big or too small - rock work, landscaping, installation and painting of recreation facilities, cleaning campgrounds, woodwork, mechanics, plumbing, concrete work, picking up trash, or operating a bobcat.

On the Columbine District, Mick works on the developed and dispersed recreation crew as a Forestry Technician.

"He completes assignments quickly, always finds extra things that need to be done, and knows how to do everything!" says his supervisor, Mena Showman.

Mick takes care of the Trimble Work Center, Haviland Lake Boat Ramp, Animas Overlook, Andrews Lake Recreation Site, and Molas Pass Overlook.

Mick also handles grounds maintenance at the PLC, and building and grounds maintenance at three seasonal employee housing units in Durango.

A native of Durango, Mick has worked all over the country in construction, on railroads, and as a cement finisher.

"In March, I'll be 81," he says proudly.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

ATVs Donated

By Brad Morrison

DURANGO - Linda Murphy needed to get rid of two ATVs. She didn't want to sell them, but wanted to donate them to a good cause. A friend recommended she donate them to the U. S. Forest Service, because we are a land-management agency and use these vehicles for much of our work.

We were more than happy to take her up on her generous offer. The two-wheel-drive 250 Bayous were almost brand new, with less than 10 hours of operating time. Nona Dale and Annett Hitchell accompanied me to Murphy's summer home and loaded the ATVs into two pickups. Our benefactor was excited to see the machines go to a good cause, and we thank her for her generosity.

(Brad Morrison is the San Juan's Safety Officer.)



Photo by Annett Hitchell

Brad Morrison, Linda Murphy, and Nona Dale pose behind the truck they've just loaded with donated ATVs.

PAGOSA PUBLIC LANDS

J.J.'s Back

By Cory Wall

PAGOSA SPRINGS - After taking the summer off to enjoy fishing, reading, and kayaking in the West, J.J. Malone, Pagosa's indispensable volunteer, is back for the fall and winter.

For the past six years, J.J. has handled fleet maintenance, landscaping, and all kinds of minor repairs for the District. No matter what task you have for him, this guy can handle it.

Although technically he works only three days a week, this dedicated volunteer is often found shoveling large quantities of snow in the worst of conditions on his days off to keep the office open and accessible.

J.J. retired in 1996 from a diverse career with the USFS and BLM, after working for 23 years across the West.

His jobs ranged from hotshot foreman, engine supervisor, and assistant fire management officer to snow ranger, avalanche forecaster, and special-uses/outfitter-guide administrator.

When he's not helping out at the office this winter, you'll find J.J. skiing.

(Cory Wall is Pagosa's Visitor Information Specialist.)

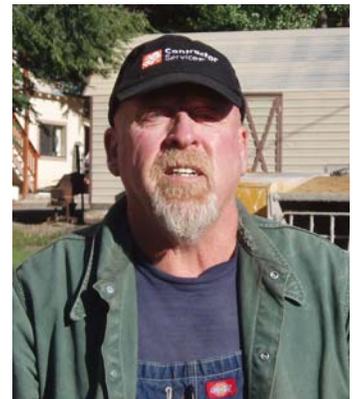


Photo by Cory Wall



Houses of Cards

By Ann Bond

DURANGO - Dick Ostergaard, SJNF Landscape Architect for 26 years, celebrated the USFS Centennial by illustrating 12 of the San Juan's historic guard stations and fire towers.

Dick created the pencil drawings from original photographs taken of the facilities while they were in service. All were built between 1905 and 1950.

"My drawings originate from an interest in Forest history, as well as course studies in architectural drawing and graphic rendering," he says.

As the San Juan's Landscape Architect, Dick works on recreation site planning and design, scenery management, scenic byways, and interpretive planning and design, which entails wayside exhibits, kiosks, and interpretive signs. He is also a Certified Interpretive Planner. His past artistic endeavors have concentrated on wildlife art and rural farmscapes.

The San Juan Mountains Association has taken the detailed pieces of art and offered them as greeting cards.

The Historic Ranger Station and Fire Tower Card series can be purchased through San Juan Mountains Association at its bookstores in our offices. Talk about the perfect thank you card for any San Juan employee!



COLUMBINE PUBLIC LANDS



Photo Courtesy Norris Family

Former Columbine District Ranger Harry Norris heading to work along the Pine River in the 1930s.

A Visit from the Norris Family

By Ann Bond

DURANGO – The family of former San Juan District Ranger Harry Norris visited the Columbine Ranger District this summer to help celebrate the SJNF Centennial.

Their father, Harry, began his San Juan career in 1918 as District Ranger at the Bridge Ranger Station. After serving in the Army, Harry returned to marry Mabel Thayer in 1920, and serve as District Ranger at Square Top Ranger Station, where Bill and Mary were born.

In 1926, Harry was transferred to the Pine Ranger District. In winter, he worked out of his home in Bayfield, and in summer, lived with the family at the Vallecito Ranger Station. In 1939, he went to the Engineer Ranger District north of Durango, where they lived in the original Columbine Ranger Station in summer. Harry worked out of the Durango office in winter. Harry lived to be 96 years old.

San Juan staff had lunch and swapped stories with the Norris family this summer. Bill and his son, Steve, donated a CD of beautiful photographs taken of San Juan locations by his father during his many years in the backcountry.

"Mary and I relived our childhood days reading your newspaper supplement, *The First 100 Years of the San Juan National Forest*," says Bill.

Many thanks to the Norris family for helping to bring our history alive.



Photo by Ann Bond

(From left) Mike Johnson, Mary Norris Wissler, Michael Norris, Bill Norris, Naomi Norris, Pauline Ellis, and Mark Stiles.

OHV Club Helps with Rehab

By Tracey McInerney

DURANGO - Members of the Creeper Jeepers put in 200 hours this year helping the USFS to rehabilitate and close illegal OHV tracks.

As part of the San Juan Mountains Association Adopt-A-Road Program, the group has put in an estimated 1,000 hours of volunteer work over the last four years.

They have replanted scarred areas, built water bars, laid excelsior with grass seed underneath, and installed travel-management signs.

These positive actions by a motorized trail club show there are many OHV enthusiasts who want to do the right thing on public lands.

(Tracey McInerney is Columbine's Volunteer Coordinator.)



Photo by Tracey McInerney

Dwight and Bev Stovall; Roger and Marilyn Olivier; and Roger, Zack, and Kyle Sterling pose next to a road-closure sign on an illegal OHV track they helped rehabilitate off Black Bear Road.



Clearing the Stock Driveway

Photo Courtesy Backcountry Horsemen

By Don Kelly

BAYFIELD - The Four Corners Backcountry Horsemen began the arduous task of clearing the historical Pine-Piedra Stock Driveway in late August.

Two dozen volunteers cleared downed timber, limbed standing trees, constructed cairns, and removed trash. In two days, they cleared almost four miles of trail. The nonprofit group hopes its work will eventually connect the stock driveway to the East Creek, Sierra Vandera, and the Pine River Trails.

The project started at Beaver Meadows Road, where a "non-motorized" portion of the driveway leads north to Slide Mountain. Two members of the San Juan Trail Riders, a motorized trail advocacy and adoption group, assisted in clearing and provided insight in mitigating OHV traffic.

(Don Kelly is the Columbine's Trails Coordinator.)

COLUMBINE PUBLIC LANDS

A Day in the Life of a Wilderness Ranger



(From left) Columbine District Wilderness Rangers: (Front) Anne Dal Vera, Isaac Murphy, Bill Ketterhagen. (Back) Tom Winter, Nate Benton, Nevada Hanners.

Wilderness Act prohibits motorized equipment.

We are the eyes and ears of managers, monitoring use levels and making recommendations on how to reduce impacts and repair damage. Wilderness Ranger Nevada Hanners worked with the Hesperus Boy Scout Troop this year to dig up and remove 1,500 thistles from a meadow on the Pine River.

We enforce Wilderness regulations, such as the group-size limit of 15 people, camping and campfires, and weed-free hay, and share *Leave No Trace* techniques and principles with visitors. We are trained in first aid, and most have Wilderness First Responder or Wilderness EMT training.



Photo Courtesy Connie English

Tim and Connie English on the Needle Creek Trail the year before her medical emergency.

that fateful day but fully appreciates the outcome.

"I know how first responders can literally make a difference between life and death, but never dreamed I would someday be on the receiving end of such an event," English says. "I'll always be grateful to the fine people who spent an entire day literally saving my life. Please extend my gratitude to everyone involved on that day."

"As their supervisor, I am proud of the professional manner in which they handled this serious situation," said Nancy Berry, Columbine Wilderness For-ester.

(Anne Dal Vera is a Wilderness Ranger for the Columbine Ranger District.)

By Ann Dal Vera

DURANGO - Columbine's Wilderness Rangers patrol some 200 miles of trails over more than 320,000 acres of the Weminuche. That means we walk an area stretching from Silverton to Vallecito, and U.S. Highway 550 to the Pine River.

We work in pairs on nine-day trips. This year, we were especially busy clearing thousands of fallen trees, which had been swept across trails by avalanches last winter. The work was done by hand with cross-cut saws and axes, because the

By Stephanie Odell

DURANGO - The removal of hazardous waste from the Needle Creek drainage of the Weminuche Wilderness was completed in one day instead of the expected three days this fall.

Last winter, mining debris was carried by an avalanche from below Columbine Pass to Needle Creek, where it posed risks to visitors and to the creek's waters.

Galvanized-metal building parts, mining supplies, and drums filled with transmission fluid, hydraulic oil, and diesel fuels were airlifted out by helicopter. Everything was removed, except one barrel in an inaccessible and dangerous spot amongst fallen trees.

The Forest Service determined that removing the hazardous waste via helicopter was appropriate.

Ann Dal Vera and her crew consolidated and packed up the materials to be removed, which made the helicopter operation go very smoothly.

Wilderness ranger/volunteer Jim Sumrall kept things in hand on the other end by taking care of security and safety at the landing pad on the Lime Creek Road.

Kudos also to EMC-Squared for organizing the project, and to Phelps-Dodge for funding the operation.

(Stephanie Odell is the San Juan Public Lands Hazardous Materials Coordinator.)



Photo by Stephanie Odell

Crews ready mining debris and hazardous waste for removal by helicopter this fall in an avalanche path in the Weminuche Wilderness.

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS

Mark Heads Over the Mountain

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - Mark Applequist has a big grin on his face these days. Not only did he recently return from a 16-day raft trip down the Grand Canyon, but he just became GIS Coordinator for the Rio Grande National Forest.

The move means Mark will no longer have to make the trip over Wolf Creek Pass to visit his wife, Sine, who is the principal for the Bill Metz Elementary School in Monte Vista.

"The decision to leave Dolores wasn't easy," says Mark, who has worked in the Dolores Geographic Information Systems Shop for the past eight years.

"I'll really miss working with Dan Greene and all the people at the Dolores Office," he says. "I know I'll miss the community as a whole, but I've worked on several projects with the folks from the Rio Grande, and they will also be a great group to work with."

(Toni Kelly is the Dolores Office's Visitor Information Specialist .)

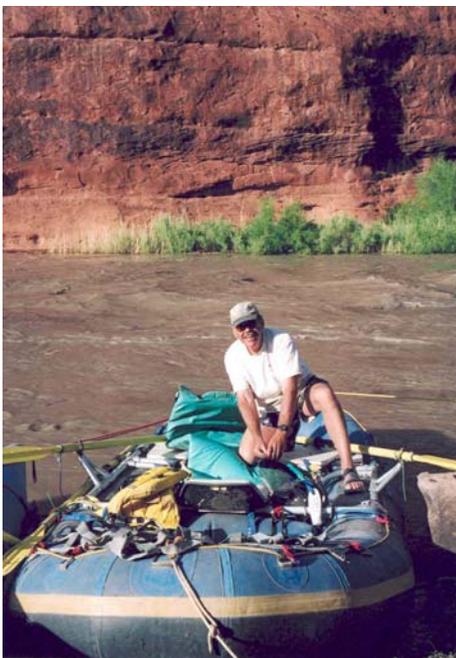


Photo Courtesy Mark Applequist

Mark Applequist in his natural environment.



Photo Courtesy Brooke Brown

Brooke Leaving for West Coast

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - Brooke Brown, who has worked as an archaeologist for the Dolores Public Lands Office since 2001, is trading in the Western Slope of Colorado for the West Coast of California.

"I'm moving to California for a change of pace and to broaden my experience as an archaeologist", she says of her new archaeology position at the BLM Ukiah Field Office in northern California. "I'm looking forward to being close to the coast, mountains, redwoods, and wine country."

Brooke came to Dolores as a USFS Archaeologist, but when a BLM position opened up a few years later with a higher grade, she turned in her green uniform for a brown one.

She says she's excited about moving closer to aunts, uncles and cousins who live in the Northern California area. Husband, Steve, and dog, Juno, are reportedly ready and willing for a change.

Tom Has Left for Towaoc

By Toni Kelly

DOLORES - Long-time SJNF employee, Tom Rennick, has moved up and on, but didn't have to travel very far for his new job.

Tom, who had been a Forester for the Dolores Public Lands Office since 1988, has taken a job as a Forester for the Ute Mountain Agency in Towaoc.

His new job responsibilities include implementing the Bureau of Indian Affairs Management Plan, while utilizing his skills as a certified silviculturist.

"I'm looking forward to working in new country and meeting new people," he says, "but I'm going to miss working in the high country."

Tom's wife, Georgena, works as a teacher's aid at Manaugh Elementary School. Their son, Kenny, is a sophomore at Montezuma County High School.

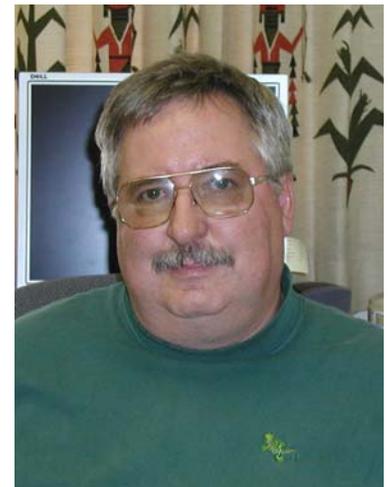


Photo by Brooke Brown

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ANASAZI HERITAGE CENTER

Reducing the Danger of Fire to Rock Art

By Linda Farnsworth

DOLORES - San Juan employees and volunteers reduced fire hazards this fall at a unique Ancestral Puebloan site in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument. The project is the first of its kind in the monument aimed at reducing fuels to protect a cultural site.

When smoke blackens stone walls with rock art or leaves soot on images, it's not only harder to see the images but harder for archaeologists to date the images. The heat can also alter or weaken the surface of the stone so that the rock art is more vulnerable to deterioration by temperature fluctuations, water, and wind.

The Painted Hand Rock Art Site has hundreds of images dating from 1,500 B.C. to the 1950s. The images are believed to have been made by Ancestral Puebloans, Utes, and possibly Navajos and Jicarilla Apaches, as well as ranchers, cowboys, sheep herders, a government trapper, and perhaps early military personnel.

The art portrays bear paws, deer, livestock, buffalo, lizards, birds, humans on horseback with bows and arrows and with rifles, and historic inscriptions.

The fire hazard resulted from dense brush and cheatgrass, which had grown up next to the sandstone wall. An adjacent landowner expressed concern to Bob Clayton of Kinder Morgan, who sits on the Monument Advisory Committee. Clayton contacted Monument Manager LouAnn Jacobson, and the project was born.

Clayton was instrumental in all phases of the project. He obtained equipment donations from several local companies and recruited a dozen boy scouts and scoutmasters from Cortez, who contributed 232 hours of hard work. The work helped the boys complete their "Historic Trails" badge requirements.

An added benefit of the project is that, now that the brush has been cleared away from the cliff face, many rock art images, not visible before, can be seen.



Photo by Allen Farnsworth

The Painted Hand Rock Art Panel after the brush removal project.

Fire crews will burn the resulting brush piles, and additional documentation will be made of the rock art. Future mitigation will include periodic spraying and brush removal.

(Linda Farnsworth is the Monument Archaeologist.)



Photo by Kathe Hayes

SJMA volunteer Diane McBride of Cortez installs a sign encouraging visitors to stay on the Sand Canyon Trail, with other National Public Lands Day volunteers.

Celebrating National Public Lands Day

By Kathe Hayes

MCELMO CANYON - For 12 years, the BLM has celebrated National Public Lands Day with volunteer projects across the U.S.

This year's local event was held in September in Sand and East Rock Creek canyons in Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, where visitation has increased three-fold in the last five years. Thirty hikers, bicyclists, and horsemen volunteered at this year's event, organized by SJMA and the BLM.

The day's work entailed closing off user-made routes that endanger sensitive landscapes and cultural sites. Most of the multiple routes end up in the same place and are unnecessary. In addition, rock cairns were put in place with new signs to keep visitors on main routes.

"Many hands make light work" was the theme of the day, and the raking, transplanting of native plants, moving of dead trees, and rock-cairn building was completed in about five hours.

In addition to the satisfaction of caring for our public lands, volunteers received a "goodie" bag, t-shirt, and a scrumptious lunch for their hard work.

(Kathe Hayes is the SJMA Volunteer Program Director.)



SAN JUAN
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SPECIAL EVENTS

Standing in Line for the Standstill

By Ann Bond

PAGOSA SPRINGS - A lunar event has made Chimney Rock Archaeological Area the place to be this summer and fall. Media crews, members of the public, and Native American tribes have been flocking to witness the lunar standstill, an astronomical event celebrated around the world at ancient sites, including the pyramids in Egypt, Mayan ruins in Mexico, and Stonehenge in England.

"Standstill" refers to the period when the moon reaches its northernmost point and appears to rise at roughly this same point for a period of about four years. From the vantage point of the Great Pueblo, the moon rises between the twin spires at certain times during the lunar standstill.

Archaeo-astronomer Dr. Kim Malville of the University of Colorado documented the phenomenon for the first time during the last lunar standstill. His theory is that pilgrimages occurred every 18.6 years (the interval between lunar standstills) to Chimney Rock between 900 to 1100 AD to view the event.

Modern-day crowds are flocking to Chimney Rock to participate in the resurrected custom this year and next year, with public tours offered to view selected lunar standstills. The ticket price of \$50 goes to sponsor Native American involvement at the site. Children under 12 are not admitted, because the steep narrow trail to the site is difficult to negotiate in the dark.

The schedule is available online at: www.chimneyrockco.org

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Photo by Ann Bond

Members of the media stay up all night to report on the lunar standstill at Chimney Rock Archaeological Area. (From left) Seated: Amy Maestas, Durango Telegraph; and Rebecca Droke, Durango Herald. Standing: Gary Fairchild and Glenn Raby of the Pagosa Ranger District; Electa Draper, Denver Post; Lisa Meerts-Brandsma, Durango Herald; and Shaun Stanley, Denver Post.

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