

A Note from Cheryl Probert, Forest Supervisor

Hello! As 2016 is in full swing, I hope you'll take this time with me to look back at some of the accomplishments and activities that have gone on in our area over the past year. As the Forest Supervisor on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, I have the privilege of leading a team of dedicated, hard-working employees who are passionate about the lands we manage for all of you! We are proud that our work contributes to the local and regional economies and we love being part of all the communities from the Palouse to the Clearwater Basin and south into the Salmon River country.

In 2015 we met some major milestones, in addition to having a record-breaking fire season! One of the most significant of those accomplishments is signing the final decision for the Clear Creek Integrated Restoration Project. This project is part of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration effort and will improve resiliency on over 11,000 acres in the Clear Creek drainage. The project includes a mix of timber harvest, prescribed burning, rangeland seeding, and road improvements to create conditions in the landscape that are more likely to withstand future disturbances from fire, floods, insects, disease and climate changes. In addition to the changes on the natural resources, the project is expected to contribute \$23 million into our local economies. Our forested vegetation and aquatic restoration programs contributed \$43 million and 1,500 jobs into our communities this year. We have also increased our presence with youth employment with the addition of one more Youth Conservation Corps in 2015 and plan to have a fourth crew out of Pierce beginning in 2016.



We couldn't do the work we do without all of the partnerships we have on the Forest and we have highlighted many of these efforts in this Newsletter. Our partner organizations are as diverse as the landscapes we manage and reflect the true diversity of the Forest Service's multiple use mission. We all share some common values—love for these lands and desire to keep them available for future generations!

We have organized this Newsletter to reflect the new vision and emphasis on the Forest. I hope you enjoy this glimpse into the amazing work we have done together to manage these magnificent landscapes and contribute to the well-being of our communities. On behalf of myself and all employees, I thank you for being a part of managing your Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests!!



The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests are about:

- *Promoting and protecting our history, wild lands and wild experiences;*
- *Connecting with our communities; and*
- *Building and restoring resiliency in our diverse landscapes, our workforce, and our relationships.*

Promoting and Protecting Our History

75th Anniversary of Smokejumping

1940.....Year that the first smokejumpers “jumped” a fire to suppress it.

At the North Cascades Smokejumper Base in 1939, experiments first began with dummies, then live jumps to determine what conditions the jumpers could safely land in. Fifty-eight experimental jumps were made in all, proving that firefighters could safely parachute into the rugged, timbered mountains to attack wild-fires.

Rufus Robinson of Kooskia, Idaho and Earl Cooley of Hamilton, Montana made the first “live” smokejump in the history of the Forest Service on the Rock Pillar Fire in the Marten Creek drainage on the Moose Creek Ranger District.



Earl Cooley, 1940.
Courtesy K.D. Swan



Rufus Robinson, 1940.
USFS Photograph

In 1951 the Region One jumpers established a base at Grangeville in order to facilitate initial attack operations across the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests and adjacent lands. In 1972 the Nez Perce Forest acquired control of the Grangeville unit.

Over 9,000 fire jumps have been made since the establishment of smokejumper operations in 1951.



Interpretive display about the Forest Service smokejumper program history.

Lochsa Historical Ranger Station Volunteers

This spring nearly 20 volunteers accomplished various work projects at the historic Lochsa Ranger Station. Volunteers included members of the Backcountry Horsemen of North-Central Idaho, Friends of the Lochsa Historic Ranger Station, and the Selway-Bitterroot Frank Church Foundation.



Volunteers hauling materials for work on the historic Lochsa Ranger Station.

Each year hundreds of visitors stop at the historic site. With the help of these generous volunteers led by Connie Saylor-Johnson, the Historic Lochsa Ranger Station provides a glimpse into the past.

416.....Number of volunteer hours engaged in historic preservation activities in FY2015.

A brochure illustrating the history of smokejumping is available at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nezperceclearwater/learning/history-culture>

Preservation Work Continues on New Florence Jail



Preservation work continued in 2015 at the New Florence jail. Photo by Steve Lucas.

This historic jail was built around the turn of the last century. At its peak the mining town boasted several thousand people with numerous businesses lining both sides of its main street. Work at the jail in 2015 consisted of the near completion of the roof and reconstruction of the jail's front vestibule.

“Florence Tells Her Secrets” and The Lure of Gold—History of Florence” brochures are available on our WWW at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/nezperceclearwater/learning/history-culture/?cid=stelprdb5115350>.



Scurvy Mountain Lookout being wrapped.

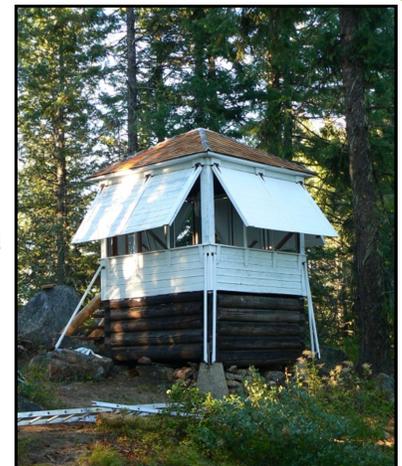
21.....Historic cabins and lookouts wrapped in foil to protect them during wildfires. Unfortunately, the Jay Point Lookout (built in 1955) was burned before it could be protected.

Balancing Rock Patrol Point Project

On rare occasion, the abandonment of a historic building can have a silver lining. This is the case of the Balancing Rock Patrol Point at a remote site overlooking the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

It was constructed in approximately 1935. It may have served an intermittent use until the mid-1950s when, like other nearby administrative sites, it was abandoned and forgotten. Upon “rediscovery” by the Forest Service in the 1970s, plans for renovation began. Finally, in 2014, volunteers with the Forest Fire Lookout Association began a careful restoration.

An estimated 300 hours of work at a site that necessitated packing in every piece of material resulted in a spectacular transformation. Luckily, this project and the incredible dedication of Jerry Branning and Tom Wolf have allowed this forest landmark a new lease on life. Preservation Idaho recognized this project with an Orchid Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation.



Restored Balancing Rock Patrol Point Landmark. Photo by Steve Lucas.



Nez Perce Tribal member at the Nez Perce National Historic Trail dedication.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest acknowledges its trust responsibility to manage in a manner that enhances treaty-reserved resources, and embraces the Nez Perce Tribe's approach of managing for future generations.

The Forest works cooperatively with the Nez Perce Tribe, tribal members and organizations such as the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club (shown in photo by Christine Bradbury) to accomplish important management objectives.

One of the most treasured resources the Forest manages is the longest contiguous segment of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail. In August 2015 the Nez Perce Appaloosa Horse Club sponsored a dedication ceremony for an interpretive sign at Indian Post Office and 2.2 miles of the newly reopened Nez Perce Trail section (from Moon Saddle to Indian Post Office) .

Protecting Wild Lands



Grangeville smokejumpers during mission on August 11. USFS



Displaced bears around the Slide and Wash fires. Marc Valencia



Structure protection on the Selway Falls Pack Station.

A fire season for the record books

For those of us who experienced the 2015 fire season in north central Idaho, we will remember it for its extremes—explosive fire behavior and devastating effects on communities and resources on one hand, and a positive rallying point for community disaster and recovery support as well as some positive impacts on the land, on the other hand.

On the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, the fires produced the same extremes—Ranger Stations, recreational infrastructure, critical habitats and timber stands were threatened by fire, most were saved, some were lost.

The season is replete with stories of heroism, hard work, and people coming together for a common goal. We could provide facts and figures on how this affected your Forest lands, but that would not tell the whole story.

Planning for the 2015 fire season began long before the lightning hit in early August. Fuel moistures were low and temperatures were high through the spring and early summer. The central Idaho fire leadership group braced for an epic season and ordered additional firefighting resources.

When lightning ignited over 250 fires between August 9-11 and immediately threatened communities outside of lands managed by Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, the additional Forest Service firefighters were already on the way.



Wildfire around Kamiah on August 13. Sheila Lehman

It is easier to count the number of communities that didn't receive evacuation notices – Grangeville, Harpster, Stites, Kooskia, Clearwater, and perhaps a few others.

Fire Season for the Record continues...

As fire threatened Kamiah, Orofino, Peck, Nezperce and other communities, we diverted our Forest initial attack personnel, aircraft, and incoming firefighting resources for use by Idaho Department of Lands to protect the public and the values most at risk at that time.

The Forest's remaining initial attack resources extinguished many of the fires on the Forest but those that were unstaffed grew big. When communities near Forest lands were threatened, firefighting resources, regardless of agency affiliation, were shared to continue to keep the public safe. This season was a true interagency effort with two countries, 26 states, nine counties, nine cities, several rural fire districts, four tribes, and seven federal agencies represented in the effort.

The 2015 fire season was intense and relatively short-lived but we will feel the impacts personally, professionally, socially, economically, and environmentally for years to come. When the smoke in the valleys cleared, over 280,000 acres of private, state, tribal, and federal land was impacted. On the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, approximately 190,000 acres burned with about two-thirds of that in the roaded front country.



Two Canadian CL-415 Super Scoopers supported firefighting efforts for the Clearwater, Municipal and Motorway Complex Fires.



Low elevation roaded front country burned during 2015 wildfires.

Fire Recovery from 2015 Wildfires

Assessing impacts and restoration began while the fires were still burning. In addition to working on National Forest lands, many current and retired Forest Service employees are assessing private lands to assist landowners (see related article on page 8).

Our current fire recovery activities include:

Fire suppression rehabilitation—Fireline rehab was done before the incident management teams left the area. Firelines in the more heavily timbered areas will not be completely finished until the majority of the cut trees are removed.

Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) - Teams inventoried and prioritized imminent post-wildfire threats to human life and safety, property, and critical natural or cultural resources on National Forest System lands. Recently we received \$1.09 million to begin to address those threats. Inventory and planning have been completed. Implementation has begun on emergency culvert replacement, adding drainage dips to roads, and felling some of the hazard trees posing the most imminent threat to safety.

Maintenance of roads, recreation sites, and administrative sites—Field personnel assessed additional maintenance needs, including hazard tree removal, and an interdisciplinary team is analyzing the impacts of those actions.

Salvage harvest for fuels reduction and insect and disease prevention—Field personnel assessed potential areas where salvage harvest is needed, practical and possible within the analysis timeframes. Three interdisciplinary teams of resource managers are developing proposed actions and analyzing impacts. These actions will help to recover the economic value of the timber to support the local and regional economy.

Large-scale Restoration—Field personnel have been inventorying reforestation needs, aquatic/stream conditions, and invasive species, and developing monitoring plans to determine fire effects. Restoration needs will be incorporated into the Forest's program of work.

Pro-active management will result in long-term ecological sustainability in many ways—by reducing the fuels; providing opportunities to reforest more acres with more resistant and resilient species, by improving wildlife habitat; and by improving the quality of life for some through jobs and income.

Promoting & Protecting Wild Lands and Wild Experiences



Giant Red Cedar Tree on the Palouse Ranger District. Photo by Adam McClory.

National Recreation Trails

Visit these trails to experience the uniqueness of the Forests!

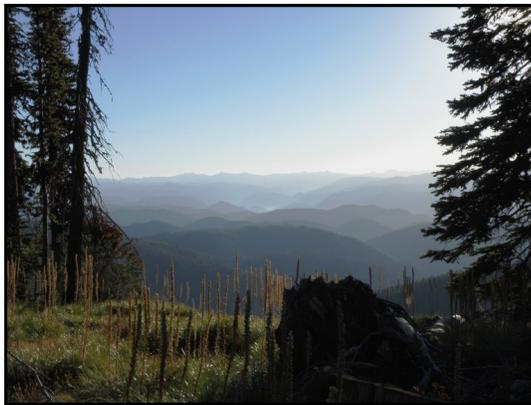
- ◆ Giant Red Cedar #748—.5 miles
- ◆ Elk Creek Falls: #740—2 miles
- ◆ Anderson Butte #835—10 miles
- ◆ Colgate Licks Nature Trail #1091 - .7 miles
- ◆ Meadow Creek #224 - 7.3 miles and #726 - 22 miles

The 36 miles of the Upper Selway River is one of the premiere permitted Wild & Scenic sections of river in the country; this is a highly sought after opportunity for those with a zest for rafting!

36,361.... Total volunteer hours in 2015.
30,406 in recreation management!

Fiscal Year 2015 Accomplishments

- 37.....**Miles of trails improved.
- 1,718.....**Miles of trails maintained.
- 1,096.....**Miles of roads maintained.



South view from Lolo Motorway
Photo by Cindy Schacher

Available for Public Use

- 4,500.....**Miles of roads open for public travel.
- 2,578.....**Miles of trails managed for motorized use.
- 2,673.....**Miles of trails managed for non-motorized use.
- 1,357.....**Miles of Wilderness trails.

1.2.....Million acres of Wilderness opportunity. 30% of the Forests are designated Wilderness offering a unique recreation experience and attracting visitors from throughout the world. Selway Bitterroot, Frank Church River of No Return, Hells Canyon and Gospel Hump Wilderness.

184.....Miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers available for rafting and kayaking; Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Lochsa, Selway, and Salmon Rivers. Rapid River is fishing and hiking only.

55.....Campgrounds on the Forests. Campers pay fees at 29 campgrounds to support additional services; reservations can be made at six of the fee campgrounds; large group accommodations can be reserved at three of these sites.

16.....Cabin and lookouts available for public rental. Plan now for a forest rental retreat!



Fifty-three miles of the Wild & Scenic Salmon River is available for jet boating enthusiasts.

Selway Bitterroot Foundation Crews (SBFC)

The SBFC maintained 392 miles of trail this year, through September 30. They cut 3,903 trees out of the trail, brushed 136 miles of trail, repaired 31 miles of tread, and hiked over 2,000 miles collectively.

It was a season interrupted by smoke and fire, but there was still a lot of good trail work completed. Spanning country

from Windy Saddle in the south to Grave Peak and Big Sand Lake in the north, there were few parts of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness that didn't see an SBFC employee this year.



Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) Crews



The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and the Nez Perce Tribe partnered with Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) in 2013 - 2015 to treat invasive plant species at watershed restoration sites, including channel restoration sites, culvert replacements and road decommissioning. Both pre- and post-treatment of restoration sites is outside of the Forests' typical early detection/rapid response program, so having a dedicated, trained MCC crew for 12 weeks each year has been crucial to the recovery of the restoration sites. Additionally, Forest and Tribe personnel educate the MCC crew about the watershed restoration work.

In 2015, MCC crews assisted with the collection of about 1,500 willow stakes for installation in the stream bank treatments along Lolo Creek at the Collette Mine site. Once the construction activities were complete, 2 MCC crews spent a week planting and seeding 4 acres at the project site which included about 6,000 containerized plants consisting of sedges, willows, alder, red osier dogwood, hawthorn, and some mixed conifer species. They also collected 700 additional willow and dogwood cuttings and snowberry seeds for the Coeur d'Alene nursery to grow for Phase 2 of the Collette Mine Project.

Great Burn Study Group

The Great Burn Study Group and the North Fork Ranger District trail crew completed six hitches throughout the season: Kelly Creek Trail #567, Isabella Creek Trail #95, Upper North Fork Trail #373, Fish Lake Trail #419, Stateline Trail #738, and Lunde Rock Garden Trail #534.

Work performed included downing trees in the trail, removing rocky outcroppings, clearing culverts, performing major trail realignment,

installing culverts, constructing rock cribs, clearing water bars and constructing new water bars, as well as installing information signs.

One study group member shared in his report, "We were lucky to work in a diversity of ecosystems during our season, with the bonus of reaching high elevation areas on several of our hitches. Each trail led us through more than one ecosystem, allowing us to grasp the true variation of habitats in the Great Burn and surrounding roadless areas."



Multi-Agency Post Fire Recovery Efforts

The 2015 fires were a warning sign for private landowners and public land managers to reaffirm the need to work cooperatively across boundaries for proactive management. As fires were still burning, government agencies and volunteers were coordinating efforts to work cooperatively on post fire rehabilitation on a landscape scale and to provide assistance to private landowners.

With the coordinating assistance of the University of Idaho Clearwater Extension Office; the Forest Service, NRCS, FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Idaho Department of Lands, and local timber industries held several community meetings to provide information on available programs and services, and to listen to the needs of landowners. More than 200 individuals attended public meetings that were held in Kamiah, Craigmont, Fraser, Riggins, and Orofino. The meetings were designed to provide assistance to agriculture producers and landowners impacted by wildfires and to help fire victims begin the long-term process of rehabilitating their land. Individuals received information packets, signed up for property assessments, and received one-on-one technical advice from experts in water, soil, forestry, and more.

As representatives from multiple agencies and a FS retiree volunteer team visited private lands, it soon became apparent that there was a greater and longer term need for local agencies to provide assistance to private landowners. Initiated and led by the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts Division II group, a multi-agency organization was developed



Photo by Julie Fowler, FSA



*Volunteer Retiree Nick Gerhardt.
Photo by Connie Jensen-Blyth*

across Idaho, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, and Latah counties. With increased fire severity in recent years due to accumulation of fuels, climate, and other factors, the multi-agency group will also focus on working proactively with private landowners to better prepare for wildfires.

Project partners include the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts Division II; Idaho, Clearwater, Nez Perce, Lewis, and Latah county commissioners, emergency response coordinators, weed superintendents, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts; Forest Service; NRCS; FSA; BLM; IDL; Clearwater Basin Collaborative; University of Idaho Extension office; Nez Perce Tribe, FS Retiree Volunteer Team, and local timber industries.

This effort has evolved into the North Central Idaho Wildfire Restoration Group and is already getting grant money to assist with priority restoration projects.

The group will be sponsoring a workshop in May, 2016 for private and industrial landowners to learn about assistance and opportunities for fire restoration, future fuels reduction, and watershed condition improvements.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests provide a lot of resources which are utilized by people living in the communities adjacent to the Forests. Here's a selection of what we provided in Fiscal Year 2015.



1,764.....personal use firewood permits sold (7,703 cords)



830..... Free use mushroom permits issued.

123..... commercial mushroom permits sold that provided \$12,300 to support the Special Forest Products Program.



717.....Christmas tree permits sold. Families have made a tradition of harvesting their Christmas trees on the National Forests!



124..... Free use post and pole permits issued.

3..... commercial post and pole permits were sold.

58.....Million board feet of timber harvested in active timber sales and stewardship contracts, providing over 1,500 jobs and \$43 million in income to communities.



Conventional logging on the Adams Stew Timber Sale near Adams Camp. Photo by Andrew Lane.



Over 32,000 tons of biomass removed across the forests. Photo by Scott Godfrey

National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM)



Forest staff interviewing a visitor at Fish Creek Road 221 above Grangeville.

We began our third round of National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) surveys on October 1, 2015 and will continue through fiscal year 2016, ending September 30, 2016. Visitor use monitoring is part of a national effort on each National Forest across the country. Every five years, Forest staff interviews forest visitors to gather information on their visit to the National Forest.

Our interviewers will be stationed at both developed and dispersed recreation sites, at trailheads and along roadways conducting exit surveys. The basic interview lasts about eight minutes, while a few select, more detailed interviews may be a few minutes longer. All responses are totally confidential. In fact, a person's name is never written on the survey. This year, the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests are

one of two National Forests across the country conducting the majority of their surveys with IPADS which will speed up the interview. This was not the case in year's past.

How is the information we gather used? It will be used to estimate how many people visit the Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs, and to better understand who our visitors are, why they come to the forest, how satisfied they are with the facilities and services provided, and how much they spend on their visit. While we gather more information from recreation visitors, we also gather information about how all people use the national forest roads and facilities including people commuting to work on forest service roads, commercial traffic, and people just passing through. This information helps managers understand all the uses occurring on the forest.

Palouse Partners with PCEI to Deliver TREAD Pledge

Adam McClory, USFS North Zone Recreation Staff Officer based out of the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests Palouse and North Fork Ranger Districts, is partnering with a local non-profit, the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI), to develop outreach materials such as trail head brochures and resources for community libraries outlining how to support ecosystem health while recreating.

Check out this trail head brochure to learn how to have a blast recreating in the forest while simultaneously protecting our beautiful natural resources. The brochure includes the Tread Lightly pledge, a description of the do's and don'ts of using motorized vehicles in natural areas, a map identifying Forest Service trails in the Upper Palouse Region, and information about other online resources.

Continued on Page 11

The message is simple: enjoy and conserve our environment! We hope you make the commitment to follow Tread Lightly! Principles as summarized in the TREAD pledge:

- ◆ Travel and recreate with minimum impacts on the land
- ◆ Respect the environment and the rights of others
- ◆ Educate yourself, plan and prepare before you go
- ◆ Allow for future use of the outdoors; leave it better than you found it
- ◆ Discover the rewards of responsible recreation



AmeriCorps members working on a trail decommissioning section.

Back Country Horsemen



North Central Idaho BCH members installing feed bunks at a remote trailhead. Photo by Roger Inghram.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forests are fortunate to have a very strong and supportive partnership with Backcountry Horsemen. The Forests work with three chapters of the Backcountry Horsemen of Idaho; the North Central Idaho (NCI) chapter, the Twin Rivers (TR) chapter and the newly formed Palouse chapter. All chapters are very active partners and each takes on two to five work projects on the Forest, annually. These chapters support a wide variety of work including trail maintenance; pack support to other Forest partner groups, spraying of noxious weeds, and campground and visitor center maintenance and opening.

These chapters are well known and appreciated for their support to keep both non-motorized and motorized trails open for everyone to enjoy. For instance, the Palouse chapter routinely maintains the Feather Creek trail; this trail was designed for mountain bike use, but

is enjoyed by horseman and hikers as well. The North Central Idaho chapter annually hosts a workday on National Trails Day at Wilderness Gateway Campground where many trail miles are opened including the Fish Creek system which allows motorcycle use.

These groups are committed to assisting other Forest partners; by doing so they promote and educate many about the importance of retaining traditional skills associated with packstring use. The Forest Service no longer has enough pack stock to support all of our partner's work projects, but we can rely on backcountry horsemen to assist these partners. The Twin Rivers chapter provides pack support to the Great Burn Study Group (GBSG) who assists with noxious weed work in the Kelly Creek area. The North Central Idaho group provides pack support to the annual National Smoke-jumpers Association (NSA) work project. All chapters assist the Forest by providing Defensive Horsemanship training to partners and employees.

We are grateful for the hard work and annual commitment these groups have in assisting the Forest with work; we appreciate the commitment of backcountry horsemen to keep alive traditional skills and to educate through example the importance of these skills.

Terrestrial Restoration

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests' timber and fuel programs focus is on restoring forest ecosystems to: reduce hazardous fuels, restore white and ponderosa pine, respond to insects and disease and restore wildlife habitat. Our goal is for diverse forests with appropriate species and density that would occur naturally resulting in a forest ecosystem that is more resilient to disturbances such as fire, insects and disease, and climate change.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction



Thinned stands in Lodge Point Project.

2015 hazardous fuels targets for the forest were 8,900 acres within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and 9,700 acres outside the WUI.

Despite an extremely short spring burn window and a very long and busy fire season, the fuels organization was able to accomplish 1,600 acres of prescribed burning and 1,500 acres of mechanical fuels treatments.

The balance of target acres for WUI and non-WUI was accomplished through wildland fires used to achieve resource objectives and sale of mechanical fuels projects from timber harvest.

White Pine Restoration

White pine forests were once common on the Clearwater National Forest and beyond. In the 1900s, white pine blister rust, a non-native pathogen, began killing white pine throughout the west. Forest managers responded with salvage to remove dead and dying trees to capture their value and remove the hazardous fuels. Grand fir and Douglas-fir, both of which are less resilient to wildfire and drought conditions, regenerated after salvage operations. More recently, the Forest Service has been producing white pine seedlings that are resistant to the blister rust. Throughout the area once occupied by white pine, we look for opportunities to convert forest stands from grand fir and Douglas-fir to white pine wherever possible to bring this important species back into the ecosystem. The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest is planting approximately 300 to 400 acres in a mixed species prescription with 40 to 60% of this mix being blister rust resistant western white pine. Pruning is done to limit the amount of infection. On average, the Clearwater portion of the Forest prunes 700 to 1000 acres of western white pine mixed plantations per year.

Ponderosa Pine Restoration

Ponderosa pine regenerates in areas that have been disturbed. It likes a lot of sun and doesn't like shade. Historically, fires underburned these forests to maintain this species on the landscape. Mature ponderosa pine has thick bark that protects the cambium layer, the area of the tree trunk that is alive and growing, from underburn fires that kill small trees and brush. As the agency became more successful at fire suppression, grand fir and Douglas-fir, which do like the shade, encroached in the understory of ponderosa pine forests, creating fuel ladders where fire could quickly get to the crowns. Because the resulting forest is denser with trees, it is also stressed through competition with water, making them more susceptible to insect and disease outbreaks and wildfires. The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest is focusing on converting acreage that was historically ponderosa pine back into conditions that are fire resistant.

Insects and Disease

Insects and disease affect all of our forest types and have become more prevalent under drought conditions and over dense and stressed forest stands. Insects and disease contribute to hazardous fuel loads throughout the forest. Forest silviculturists use all of the following methods to prevent and curtail spread of insect and disease: pre-commercial thinning, pruning, pheromone treatments, and planting of non-susceptible species.

2015 Accomplishments

- 800.....Acres of pre-commercial thinning (insect focus)
- 700.....Acres of white pine pruning (disease)
- 800.....Acres of early seral specie planting (insect and disease)
- 500.....Acres of whitebark pine pheromone treatments (insect)

Cutting Edge Research to Help Wildlife Habitat

As part of the Clearwater Basin Collaborative’s elk monitoring project, scientists of the National Council for Air & Stream Improvement in conjunction with the Pacific Northwest Research Station and Idaho Fish & Game Department, are developing spatially explicit models in a geographic information system to map summer nutritional resources for the Clearwater River Basin.

Two primary efforts were started this winter in support of new modeling work this spring: 1) refine the existing models to better represent vegetation and ecological conditions in Idaho including developing new models for future validation; and 2) prepare data sets of body fat and pregnancy rates from Oregon and Washington including the new data from Idaho to begin an initial validation of the current and new nutrition models.



Bugling Bull Elk in late fall. Images by Inghrams.

Stewardship Contracting



Road stabilization to reduce sediment in the Selway River. Photo by Mike Ward.

About half of our timber program is accomplished through stewardship contracts. Stewardship contracts allow the Forests to use of funds received from the timber to fund other critical restoration activities within the project area. In 2015, stewardship contracts funded projects such as road decommissioning, reconditioning and maintenance; culvert replacement; rock pit development and rock crushing; pond repair; fuel treatments; decommissioning and obliterating roads, landings, and skid trails; weed spraying; reforestation; trail maintenance and reconstruction; bridge replacement; and pre-commercial thinning.

Our Integrated Restoration Timber Contracts had a revenue value of \$10,101,471 and restoration projects costing \$4,490,408. Additionally, we used retained receipts (collected from previous Fiscal Year IRTCs that were nearing completion) to fund @\$1,225,000 of restoration projects. Not all of the approved projects were completed, but that was our initial allocation.

2015 Accomplishments

- 1,280.....acres treated with timber harvest
- 1,200.....acres pre-commercially thinned and white pine pruning
- 8,000.....acres of noxious weed treatment

Building and Restoring Resiliency in Our Diverse Landscapes

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project (CFLRP) Highlight



Mike Ward, coordinator of the CFLRP, said the interface fuel treatment worked as advertised. "It's nice to know these things work," he said.

Interface Fuels

The Woodrat Fire (6,459 acres) was successfully contained, in-part, within the Interface Fuels Project area. Incident Management Teams and ground forces were able to utilize previously burned areas (Swan Creek Prescribed Fire) and mechanically treated areas (Interface Fuels), to help protect local communities (Middle Fork and Syringa) and facilitate tactical operations. The fuels reduction work

functioned exactly as planned and gave the firefighters a safe and effective place from which to anchor their containment lines when engaged with the Woodrat Fire. Woodrat threatened the communities for 3 weeks this summer season. BAER funds have been requested to rehabilitate recreation sites, treat noxious weeds and repair road damage.

Invasive Plant Management

The Forest treated approximately 8,000 acres of invasive plant infestations in 2015, which included hand pulling, herbicide spraying, and bio-control releases. Hard working temporary employees, volunteers, and partners were crucial in accomplishing much of the work. Key partnerships include: Idaho Fish and Game, Nez Perce Tribe Watershed Division, Nez Perce Tribe Bio-Control Center, National Park Service, Great Burn Study Group, Back Country Horseman, Montana Conservation Corps, CBC Youth Conservation Corps, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, University of Montana, University of Idaho, and associated County governments. The Forest is also a key participant in the Palouse, Clearwater Basin, Upper Clearwater, Salmon River, and Frank Church Cooperative Weed Management Areas. CWMA's are formed when the landowners and land managers of a given area (private, state, and federal lands) come together and agree to work cooperatively to control invasive species. Early detection of new invaders and rapid response is the main focus of the CWMA's Integrated Weed Management Strategy.

Collette Mine Restoration and more!



Waw'aalamnime Creek restoration involved placing log jams to redirect flow.

Several large channel and meadow restoration projects were implemented in 2015:

- Collette Mine Restoration, Phase 1, improved ESA fisheries for steelhead and reduced chronic sediment to Lolo Creek from over 1,000 feet of streambank improvements.
- 23,000 cubic yards of dredge piles were removed from another 5 acres of floodplain on Newsome Creek.
- Upper Corral Meadow Restoration involved re-watering 5 acres of meadow.

Other Watershed Restoration partners include Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Latah and Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Idaho Office of Species Conservation, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho YCC crews, Montana Conservation Corps, and Palouse Clearwater Environmental Institute.

Watershed Restoration Partnerships

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests have been working with partners including the Nez Perce Tribe to improve conditions for fish within North Central Idaho. This partnership is the cornerstone of a 7 million dollar per year watershed restoration program on the Forests.

- 86.... Miles of instream habitat improved
- 63..... Miles of roads decommissioned
- 15.....Culverts replaced
- 12.....Miles of upstream habitat opened for fish passage

Multiple Species Monitoring Using a Remote Camera Grid

The Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest and IDFG deployed a network of remote cameras in the Middle Fork CFLRP project area to monitor multiple species of wildlife. The data will provide information on the distribution of species and the probability of occurrence and will be useful to wildlife conservation and management for a wide range of species: from common species, like elk, deer, bears and wolves, to furbearers, like bobcats and marten, to sensitive species, like fishers, to prey species, like snowshoe hares and red squirrels. It may even be possible to evaluate age structure of male ungulates, like whitetail deer or elk, using horn criteria (i.e. spike, immature/raghorn, or mature) or to track fawn or calf survival using doe:fawn and cow:calf ratios over time.

In May of 2015 we put out 52 cameras in approximately 36 square miles across the Clear Creek drainage. These cameras will be out collecting pictures continuously for >1 year. In late October we visited the cameras, downloaded the summer pictures and deployed prototype scent pumps at 18 of them. These pumps will release scent daily all winter and are expected to increase detections of multiple forest carnivore species.

Bat Monitoring

In 2012, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) partnered with the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests to establish five mobile bats transects within the Middle Fork CFLRP Project Area (a 6th transect was added in 2014). Over 4900 acres have been surveyed.

These routes have been run three times each summer since 2012. Nine bat species have been consistently and repeatedly detected.

The objective in establishing these routes was to sample the entire range of habitat types and elevation in the area with the ultimate goal of documenting the distribution of bats in the area and improving our understanding of how they respond to forest management actions over time.



The most commonly detected species include the Long-legged Myotis.

Fisher Monitoring



*Fisher in live-trap.
Photo contributed by Rema Sadak.*

During the winters of the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015, five adult females fishers were successfully live-trapped, collared, and data collected.

Using funding from the Middle Fork CFLRP project, two technicians spent six weeks collecting vegetation data to validate Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) data collected across large sections of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. This was done in collaboration with Dr. Andrew Hudak from the Rocky Mountain Research Station's Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Moscow, Idaho.

This field data will be used to calibrate LIDAR data collected across the Forest and produce fine-scale habitat layers that can be used by this project and other projects occurring on the Forest.

Building and Restoring Resiliency in our Workforce

Her colleague nominated Aubree as an Unsung Hero for "the time she spends in training and in the ambulance performing lifesaving procedures that she doesn't get paid for."

Chaffee is an Unsung Hero

Congratulations to Aubree Chaffee of the Red River Ranger District for being selected a USDA Unsung Hero for 2015!

She is one of 12 USDA employees or teams chosen for the award. Aubree is a Forest Service fire technician who specializes in fire prevention and suppression. Aubree is also a vol-

unteer with the Elk City Ambulance corps and was a critical first responder to a colleague experiencing a life threatening emergency.

During this emergency, Aubree quickly transported her colleague to the nearest hospital, which was nearly 60 miles away.



Rogers Honored With Safety Culture Award

Congratulations to Brett (Smiley) Rogers, Assistant Fire Management Officer, Lochsa Ranger District, on receiving the Regional Forester's Honor Award for Safety Culture.

His presentation on Human Factors and Snags is being used across the Northern Region of the Forest Service (Region 1) and beyond to help firefighters think differently about risk management and the environments they operate in.

This year Nez Perce-Clearwater staff handed out hundreds of pamphlets to Incident Management Teams and firefighters on our green tree cedar snags, a work that Brett helped put together.

Brett is continuously keeping safety and risk management in the leadership conversations as part of the Safety Journey, with the Forest Leadership Team, and in his role on the Forest Safety Committee.

Job Fairs Held to Share Employment Opportunities

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests held job fairs in December at local Department of Labor Offices in Lewiston, Grangeville, Orofino and Moscow. Forest Service representatives shared employment opportunities with the USDA Forest Service and how to apply for positions. Temporary employees have a very special place within the Forest Service. Most Forest Service career employees started out in temporary positions, including as trail crew workers, fire look-outs, seasonal biologists, and many more. Seeking a temporary or seasonal job with the Forest Service is a great way to gain experience with the agency.

Internship Program with University of Idaho

The Forests are partnering with the University of Idaho in Moscow to develop an internship program. This program will be mutually beneficial for both organizations. The Forest Service will provide students with real job experience to give them a competitive edge after graduation. The University will provide their brightest students for summer jobs on the Forest. Initially, internships will be offered in Forestry, Engineering, and Wildlife but the intent is to expand into any program area that overlaps forest work.

Clearwater Basin YCCs Recipient of Outstanding Project Award



The Clearwater Basin Youth Conservation Corps (CBYCC), a collaborative effort that resulted in employment and natural resource training for 20 north-central Idaho youth this

past summer, has been recognized as the State of Idaho's "2015 Outstanding Project" by the Idaho Resource Conservation and Development Association.

The CBYCC program builds on the familiar Youth Conservation Corps and Idaho Youth Conservation Corps programs. It was initiated in 2013 when the Clearwater Basin Collaborative, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Idaho Department of Labor, and Framing Our Community became partners to develop a local youth program that was responsive to legislation authorizing the national Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program.



From 2013 through 2015, the program has provided employment and training for 46 youth in the communities of Elk City, Grangeville, Kooskia, Kamiah, Pierce, and Orofino.

The list of partners supporting the program has grown from the four primary collaborators to a group that includes Idaho County, the Bureau of Land Management, the Corps of Engineers, Idaho Firewise and the Nez Perce Tribe.

More information on the CBYCC including video clips can be found at the Clearwater Basin Collaborative's website: <http://www.clearwaterbasincollaborative.org/>

CBC Committee receives Lincoln Honor Award



Clearwater Basin Collaborative

finding solutions



The Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC) group was recently recognized with the Abraham Lincoln External

Partnership Honor Award (formally known as the Secretary of Agriculture's Honor Award) for their thoughtful, deliberative problem solving that resulted in accelerated restoration and ecological, social and economic benefits for the citizens of North-Central Idaho.

Convened by Idaho Senator Mike Crapo in 2008, the Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC) has changed the tone of public dia-

logue regarding forest management in North-Central Idaho.

The group has collaborated on dozens of restoration projects, including Farm Bill priority landscapes, and built public support for active management within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Consequently, the Forest Service has accelerated restoration activities.

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Offices

Forest Supervisor's Office

903 3rd Street
Kamiah, Idaho 83536
208-935-2513
Forest Supervisor: Cheryl Probert
Deputy Forest Supervisor: Ralph Rau

Grangeville Office

104 Airport Road
Grangeville, ID 83530
208-983-1950

Red River Ranger District

300 American River Road
Elk City, ID 83525
208-842-2245
District Ranger: Terry Nevius

Moose Creek Ranger District

831 Selway Road
Kooskia, ID 83539
208-926-4258
District Ranger: Joe Hudson

Salmon River Ranger District

304 Slate Creek Road
White Bird, ID 83554
208-839-2211
District Ranger: Jeff Shinn

North Fork Ranger District

12730 Highway 12
Orofino, ID 83544
208-476-4541
District Ranger: Andrew Skowlund

Palouse Ranger District

1700 Highway 6
Potlatch, ID 83855
208-875-1131
District Ranger: Stefani Spencer

Lolo Pass Visitors Center

Lochsa/Powell Ranger District
Powell Office
21200 Hwy 12 West
Lolo, MT 59847
208-942-3113
District Ranger: Brandon Knapton

Lochsa/Powell Ranger District

Kooskia Office
502 Lowry Street
Kooskia, ID 83539
208-926-4274
District Ranger: Brandon Knapton



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Go to our WWW at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/nezperceclearwater>

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