

SAN JUAN NATIONAL FOREST NEWSLETTER

Summer 2016

Internships Offer Diverse Experiences for Students

THE SAN JUAN NF is pleased to be hosting five interns over the summer sponsored by the *Greening Youth Foundation*, a nonprofit which nurtures stewardship among underserved youth and young adults by exposing them to conservation careers.



Alex Tuckwin & Dominic Goseyun

PAGOSA SPRINGS - The Pagosa RD is hosting two *Greening Youth* interns from Haskell Indian Nations University, a Tribal university in Lawrence, Kansas, which offers Associate and Bachelor's degree-level education to Native American students. Haskell's students are all members of federally recognized tribes.

Alex Tuckwin, a member of the Prairie Band of the Potawatomi Tribe of Kansas, is a junior at Haskell studying American Indian Studies. He hopes to go on into teaching. Dominic Goseyun, a member of the White Mountain Apache Tribe of Arizona, is transferring to Fort Lewis College this fall after studying Creative Writing at Haskell.

DOLORES - The Dolores RD is hosting Kelly Whitehair (not shown), a member of the Navajo Tribe from Mexican Water, Arizona, and a student at Utah State University studying recreation management. She is getting a diversity of experience on the District from working on the Dolores Ecology crew assisting with the Dolores Range Program to helping with public involvement for a district a travel management analysis. Kelly will also be helping out in recreation to give her more exposure to her program of study.

DURANGO - The Public Lands Center is hosting two Fort Lewis College students. Liberty Foster is a biology and anthropology major, who was born and raised on the Colorado Plateau. She wants to hone her Geographic Information Systems (GIS) skills and is interested in cartography, archaeology and interpretation.

Koya Maniss, is an engineering major who loves the outdoors and is excited to participate in a variety of office and field assignments. She is from Alaska and is part Inupiaq Eskimo, and both her parents have worked in natural-resource fields; her father in agriculture and her mother in the oil and gas industry. Koya looks forward to the hands-on learning she receive from her internship.



Liberty Foster & Koya Maniss

- Ann Bond

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Fire Safety First

The annual USFS Durango Air Tanker Base *Safety Fly-In* helps prepare agency crews and cooperators each year to respond safely and quickly to backcountry emergency-response situations, including wildland fire. In attendance this May were San Juan NF wildland fire and backcountry trail crews, BLM SW District fire suppression resources, Mesa Verde Helitack, Flight For Life, Durango Fire and Rescue, Los Pinos and Upper Pine districts, and the Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute agencies.

Emergency Response Ready



San Juan NF employees participated in hands-on emergency response exercises in June during the Forest's annual certification classes for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first aid training, including the use of automated external defibrillators.

2016 has been Busy!

We have accomplished so much already this year with more busy months ahead. I hope you will pause and reflect on the good work you've completed - safely! Highlights include:

The **Recreation Site Analysis** involved our partners and public to help finalize a Plan of Work for our developed recreation facilities. We can now move forward on environmental analysis and implementation for projects to help achieve a workload commensurate with our capacity.

Expanded public scoping for the **Hermosa Special Management Area Plan** continues. The Columbine RD is doing great work conducting open houses and field trips to garner input from stakeholders.

The Washington Office has identified **Chimney Rock National Monument** as one of 16 *Valuing Outdoor Experiences Demonstration Areas* across the nation. Our expectation is that this focus will translate into enhancements for visitor experience through site improvements.

The **Joint Chief's Project**, for which we have received more than a million dollars in additional funding, continues on the Pagosa RD, accomplishing fuels reduction across federal and private boundaries. This collaboration has also resulted in substantial funding for our partners.

Public involvement continues for the **Rico-West Dolores Travel Management Plan**, with an environmental analysis out for final comment. The Dolores RD has worked hard to engage public participation and recently extended the comment deadline.

Across the Forest, we have conducted seven **Life First!** conversations with employees and partners, engaging in discussions around the concept of agreeing to "*Stop, Think, and Talk*" before taking action to increase the odds that everyone returns home safely from their jobs.

Please know that I appreciate the hard work and dedication of our employees and partners.

Have a safe, fun, and productive field season!

- Kara Chadwick
Forest Supervisor



SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Laurie Goes Regional, Stays Local

DURANGO - Laurie Swisher, San Juan NF Forester and Old Growth Coordinator, has been named R2 Regional Vegetation Applications Coordinator. She'll be teleworking from her current office at the PLC.

Laurie started her USFS career in 1984 as a seasonal Forestry Technician on the Gunnison NF, then spent three seasons on the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie NF and two on the White River NF. She arrived on the San Juan in 1990 as a seasonal Forestry Technician, then became a permanent Forester on the San Juan in 1997.

Laurie is a founding members of the San Juan String Band, which provides conservation education to audiences through music. "It's a great way to connect the Forest Service with the public in a positive way," she says.

Laurie holds a Bachelor's degree in Forest Management from the University of California, Berkeley. She is proud of helping develop the Forest's old-growth database. Due to her efforts, every forested stand on the San Juan has been evaluated for its old-growth characteristics to help inform management decisions.

- Ann Bond

Go Green at Fire Camp

USFS employees are reminded to reduce waste to help the agency sustainably manage fire camps by ...

- using bulk water, if possible (bottled water costs more and depletes more resources).
- avoiding unnecessary vehicle idling (it creates unnecessary pollution, and if we protect our lungs on the fire line, then we should do the same where we sleep and eat).
- Recycling as much as possible (look for opportunities to reduce waste otherwise slated for a landfill).
- Reducing food waste (when food goes to landfills, it rots and produces methane, a greenhouse gas with 21 times the global warming potential compared to carbon dioxide).

- USDA Forest Service Sustainable Operations



(L-R) Ron and Vicky Duvall, Matthew Syring (wilderness intern), Brian White, Jeremiah Hyslop, Kara Chadwick, Jessica Stromsdorfer (wilderness intern), and Mark Lambert joined the community this spring to spruce up downtown for the busy summer tourist season.



(L-R) USFS retirees & their spouses (front row) Mike Curran, Pat LaMay, (second row) Ted LaMay, Carol Foth, Jan Newlin, Mike Johnson, and (back row) Don Foth, Liz Haden, Bob Newlin, and Mark Tucker joined USFS and BLM employees at our annual *Cheeseburgers in Paradise* cookout in May.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Ryan Heads Inland

DURANGO - Ryan Halonen is the San Juan's new Facilities Engineer, handling maintenance, management and design. Previously, he was an engineer with the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center in San Diego, California. Prior to that, he was a Civil/Coastal Engineer with Halcrow (now CH2MHILL) in Jacksonville, Florida.

Ryan holds a Master's degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor's in Ocean Engineering from the Florida Institute of Technology. He enjoys skiing, cycling and surfing. He and his wife, Melissa, have three children - Raya, 5; Finn, 4 and Eleni, 1 - and a golden retriever.

"I'm excited to start a career with the Forest Service," Ryan says. I look forward to helping create and maintain places where the public and younger generations can have positive outdoor experiences." - *Ann Bond*



Chuck is New in Purchasing

DURANGO - Chuck Cooper is the San Juan NF's new Purchasing Agent. He'll also serve as the Local Agency Program Coordinator to monitor purchase credit card transactions.

Previously Chuck was a Purchase Agent for Ralph H. Johnson Veterans Association Medical Center in Charleston, South Carolina. Prior to that, he was a Prosthetic Representative and Purchase Agent in Butler, Pennsylvania, where he also served as both a volunteer and paid Emergency Medical Technician.

Chuck has worked in Procurement since 2002 through the Veterans Administration and holds an Associate Degree in Business Management. He is a die-hard Pittsburgh Penguin fan and enjoys playing guitar.

"I'm excited to be onboard in this wonderful area," he says. "I look forward to assisting and sharing my knowledge in the procurement field."

- *Ann Bond*



From the Fire into the Frying Pan

DURANGO - Mike Bryson, Dolores RD an Engine Captain, is detailing into the PLC this summer as San Juan NF Budget Analyst.

Mike's resume includes working as a hotshot, heli-rappeller, and helicopter crewmember and manager for the Alaska Fire Service. He also worked in fire on the Prescott, Inyo and Humboldt-Toiyabe NFs and Mesa Verde NP.

Although most of his experience has been in fire, Mike holds a Finance Degree from Birmingham Southern College.

"Coming from the fire side, we don't get to see how the budget side of the Forest Service works, so I'm excited to learn about the processes that make the agency run on a daily basis," Mike says.

- *Ann Bond*

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT



Lew is New in Realty

BAYFIELD - Lew Sovocool is the new Columbine Realty Specialist handling non-recreation special-use permits and land adjustments. Lew was a wildland firefighter with the San Juan Hotshots from 2011 to 2012, and most recently worked as a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist for Momentum Energy Group in Durango. He also served as a U.S. Army Engineer Officer at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Lew holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental and Resource Economics from Cornell University and is working on his Master's of GIS from Penn State University. He and wife, Amy, are expecting their first child, a son, to soon join the family, including dog, Duke. Lew enjoys mountain biking, skiing, river sports, and family time. "I'm excited to be with the Forest Service again and to interact with the different program areas," Lew says.

- Ann Bond

Summer Details on the District

BAYFIELD - There are some new faces and new assignments to keep up with on the Columbine RD this summer. While Don Kelly, Columbine Trails Foreman, is on detail as Assistant Manager at the Durango Air Tanker Base, **Forrest Saville**, Coconino NF Red Rock RD Trails Supervisor (at left), is filling in.



Forrest holds a Bachelor's degree in Geology from Texas Tech University and has worked in wilderness therapy and for the Southwest Conservation Corps. He started his USFS career on the San Juan NF as a Dolores RD trail crew leader and is excited be back.

Hon Schlapfer, Columbine Assistant Fire Management Officer (AFMO), is spending the summer on detail in McCall, Idaho, managing wildfire aircraft. While Hon's away, **Jay Godson**, San Juan Hotshots Superintendent (at right), is detailed in as District AFMO. (Lance Martin is serving as Hotshots Superintendent in Jay's absence.)



Meanwhile, **Nate Christiansen**, also from the San Juan Hotshots (bottom left), is serving a summer detail as Columbine Wildland Fire Module Assistant.



Frank Stuckman, who was the former Assistant on the Fire Module (bottom right), is now the Captain for Engine # 682, supervising a four-person crew.

Frank has been on the Columbine RD since 2009. Prior to that, he was a U.S. Army Airborne Infantry/Calvary Recon Scout at Fort Benning, Georgia, and served In Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Frank and his wife, Ashli, both Durango natives, have a son, Zaiden, 2, and two dogs, Boots and Stihl. Frank enjoys hunting, camping, fishing and family time.

- Ann Bond



COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT



Corrals Completed

VALLECITO - Big thanks to local Backcountry Horsemen volunteers who spent much of the spring building new corrals at the Pine River Trailhead north of Bayfield.

The work was the culmination of nearly a year of planning and labor by the Four Corners and San Juan Backcountry Horsemen and McCarty Construction Company, with oversight by the Columbine RD.

Site preparation and setting uprights in concrete began in late April. For the next several weeks, pipe was cut and grinded, components welded, hinges and gates fabricated, uprights capped, aspen bark mulch placed, excelsior mats laid, and disturbed ground re-seeded.

One hitch rail was reset onsite, and two others were transported to the Pagosa RD storage yard for later repurposing.

The job entailed 165 hours of basic labor and 111 hours of skilled labor. Volunteers logged a total of 2,843 miles driving to and from the worksite, hauled materials and equipment 1,214 miles, donated 82 hours of power equipment, and 10 hours of heavy equipment. The value of the entire donated effort was more than \$14,646, with the hard costs for material about \$1,500.

Thanks to Gary Staplekamp, Chris Smyth, Ken Hoff, Ken Beck (shown hard at work at upper left), Bill Gilbert, Bob Croll, Anne Rapp, Bob Parsons, Todd Rodas, Vern Jahnke, Chuck Wanner, Dan Liccardi, and Bob Volger for actively participating in this great achievement.

- Ann Bond

DOLORES PUBLIC LANDS OFFICE

Martin is New Pre-Sale Forester

DOLORES - Martin Aksentowitz is now Pre-Sale Forester for the Dolores RD. He'll be busy implementing the District's timber sale program, supervising cruising and marking, determining sale volume, and preparing reports, appraisals and contracts. He is also responsible for ensuring contract requirements are being met through on-site inspections.

Previously, Martin worked with the San Isabel Land Protection Trust in Westcliffe, Colorado, through the *AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America* (VISTA) Program from 2014 to 2016. There, he helped construct a stewardship services initiative and offered free forest-health consultation for landowners, who held conservation easements with the trust. He also organized free forest-health workshops for the community.

From 2011 to 2013, Martin worked with the Peace Corps in Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe. Prior to that, he worked with the Coconino Rural Environment Corps from 2009 to 2010.

Martin holds a Bachelor's degree in History, with a minor in Anthropology from Northern Arizona University and a Master's degree in Forestry from Michigan Technological University. He enjoys camping, hiking, cycling, fishing, hunting, and practicing primitive outdoor skills. He also speaks a little German and Romanian.

"I'm eager to learn the different requirements and opportunities involved in my new position and to complete projects on the ground," Martin says.



- Ann Bond

PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT



Helping a Campground Heal

PAGOSA SPRINGS - In celebration of Earth Day and Arbor Day, the Pagosa RD planted 600 ponderosa pine saplings this spring around the northern loop of Williams Creek Campground.

Jesse Jones, lead Pagosa RD Forestry Technician (above left), organized the planting efforts. District resource specialists (including Tyler Albers, shown above right) helped plant the saplings on about 10 acres of the campground.

The campground is a popular recreation destination near Williams Creek and Reservoir, and archaeological evidence suggests that people have occupied the area and used the forest's natural resources for millennia.

In the fall of 2011, the spread of a root disease in campground trees became so extensive that the district determined camping was unsafe, and the campground was closed until at-risk trees could be removed.

Dead and dying trees were cut down and removed to protect visitors and infrastructure. The landscape was then allowed to heal from the impacts of the tree removal.

Jones plans to monitor the saplings' condition as they grow. Long-term studies will help future foresters plan and manage for healthy trees and safe camping.

- Brandon Caley

Rerouting a Trail

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Pagosa Springs Middle School eighth graders joined forces earlier this month with the Pagosa RD and other local organizations to complete the school's third annual community service project.

Approximately 100 students and teachers worked alongside Pagosa trails crew members and other volunteers to re-route half a mile of a popular mountain-bike trail in the popular Turkey Springs area.

The goal was to move the trail out of a marshy area and into a forested area skirting a long meadow.

To create the new trail, crews used shovels and other tools to remove rock and vegetation. They covered the old section of trail with limbs and pine needles to reclaim it.

Other groups involved included the San Juan Outdoor Club, San Juan Backcountry Horsemen, Wolf Creek Wheel Club, Pagosa Area Trails Council, Retro Metro Kids, Pagosa Trail Riders and Pagosa Mountain Sports.

The project is the third of its kind in our community, and more are planned in the future. With civic competencies now a part of every child's education in Archuleta School District, the goal is to instill service learning in all students.

- Principal Chris Hinger,
Pagosa Springs Middle School

