

Oct-Dec 2007

Volume 2 Issue 1



Courageous Conservation
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Keeping You Informed

R9 Regional Foresters and Directors:

This year, the three National Forests in Michigan decided to visit our delegation on Capitol Hill in December. Our strategy was to connect with them at a time of year when, theoretically, they would have more time to meet with us and consider our issues. Our visits on the Hill went well, and we also enjoyed the opportunity to connect with lots of folks at the Washington Office. For more about the visits, see page 2.

Hope you had a great holiday season...

Tom



Human Resources Highlights

- In October, Mike Evans began as Special Agent for Hiawatha, Ottawa and Chequamegon-Nicolet NFs. He comes to us from the US Attorney General's Office in DC.
- Dave Maercklein, Planner, has been assigned the additional duty of Fire Staff Officer.
- Mike Martin, Chippewa National Forest, is Acting Deputy District Ranger on the Sault Ste Marie/St. Ignace Ranger Districts
- Tom Schmidt will be leading the National Fleet BPR process beginning in January 2008.

Recent Success Stories

Native Plant Restoration on Indian Wild & Scenic River Corridor

In spring of 2007 the Hiawatha National Forest undertook a project to rehabilitate eroding banks and restore native vegetation along the Indian Wild and Scenic River using live fascines made from native plant material. The project was lead by Hydrologist Linda Peterson, Rapid River/Manistique Ranger Districts.

Forest & Tribe: Greenhouse

Hiawatha National Forest and Bay Mills Indian Community worked together to encourage native plant propagation.



Silver Creek Bridge: Partner Celebrates HNF on NPLD

This summer the Hiawatha constructed and opened a new North Country Trail bridge spanning the picturesque Silver Creek. The Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter of the North Country Trail Club Association celebrated the project by staging a National Public Lands Day hike to the site. East Unit Recreation Technician Justin Carrick accomplished the project with the help of prison crew and Forest service employees.

For more details, visit the R9 SSRS intranet website!



On our last day in DC, we enjoyed a visit with the Chief and the new Eastern Regional Forester.

Connecting Citizens to the Land: Hill Visits

December 10-13 the three National Forests in Michigan made their annual visits to the Michigan delegation on Capitol Hill. Participating in the trip from the Hiawatha were Tom Schmidt and Public Affairs Officer Janel Crooks. Sue Spear (Ottawa Forest Supervisor) and Jerry Bird (Huron-Manistee's Deputy Forest Supervisor) were the other members of our group.

It's always good to reconnect with our delegation, but this year's visit felt especially productive. WO Legislative

Affairs asked us to carry specific information regarding national issues including bioenergy and biofuels; the 9th Circuit decision regarding Categorical Exclusions; Recreation Enhancement Act authorities; the budget and Fire Suppression funding; and operating under a Continuing Resolution.

In terms of local issues, we provided each delegation member with an informational briefing about the three forests. Included in their packets were briefing papers regarding implement-

ing the Travel Management Rule, Recreation Facility Analysis, Emerald Ash Borer, and Minerals.

All our Hill Visits went well. In many cases, we felt like our visits were really appreciated by the staffers.

Plus we were able to touch base with Washington Office staff regarding a variety of ongoing matters.

So, overall, it was a very useful trip — a key tool ensuring communication between the agency and the Hill.

Retirements

- Randy Parr, Recreation Technician, Rapid River /Manistique Ranger District
- Howard Guindon, Engineering Technician, Supervisors Office
- Pat Green, Forestry Technician, Rapid River/Manistique Ranger District
- Kenny Wilson, Equipment Operator, Rapid River/Manistique Ranger District

Revolutionize Effectiveness & Efficiency: Workforce Planning Team

In light of current and predicted budgets, the Forest has been working to update its Workforce Plan. A Workforce Planning Team consisting of seven employees representing various disciplines, units and the union developed two workforce plan alternatives for the Forest. These alternatives were presented to the Forest Leadership Team (FLT) in October. In early November, Tom Schmidt presented the al-

ternatives to the Forest's employees and requested they review them and provide comments by December 10th.

Currently, the comments are being compiled and will be reviewed by the FLT in January and an alternative Workforce Plan will be selected. The next step will be the development of an Implementation Plan by the Core Workforce Team and an Implementation Team

(consisting of employees from around the Forest).

Meanwhile, as part of an effort to help the Forest and its employees, we are developing an Employee Skills and Interests database. The information in the database will help the Implementation Team and decision makers utilize employees' skills efficiently as we operate with a smaller workforce.

Be An Employer of Choice: Forest Awards Potluck

As we face times of change, challenge and opportunity, it's more important than ever to take time to recognize our successes. On Thursday, November 29, the Hiawatha National Forest did just that. We gathered for our annual Forest awards ceremony and pot-

luck.

Held centrally between our two units in the small town of Gulliver, the event included presentation of numerous awards, including recognition of those nominated for Regional Forester Honor Awards and those who contributed to Success

Stories reported in the SSRS.

In addition, we enjoyed an outstanding potluck lunch and a special "History of the Hiawatha" presentation by Forest Archaeologist, John Franzen.

Valley Spur Ski Trail

"... is a favorite destination of many dedicated cross-country skiers."

From "Hunt's Guide to the U.P."

Team Highlights

Public Service

Valley Spur Partnership Evolves – The Forest recently signed a 10-year special use permit (SUP) with Noque- menon Trail Network and Friends of Valley Spur for management of Valley Spur Trail System. Through the SUP, our experienced partners will provide grooming and trail maintenance for the Valley Spur ski trail and mountain bike trail systems. For its part, the Forest Service has donated grooming equipment. As a result of the new SUP, a new fee structure is in place for Valley Spur Ski Trail, which is now part of the Noque- menon Trail Network's system of trails.

Ski Trails in Excellent Condition – Looking for an opportunity to get out of the office and do an official "trail check"?! Look no further than the UP for great cross country skiing! Plan ahead: Nordic Ski Club of Milwaukee will make its annual pilgrimage Feb 29-Mar 2 ...

Ecosystem

Emerald Ash Borer – On October 5th, 2007, Michigan's Cooperative Emerald Ash Borer Response Project confirmed an infestation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Discovered during the inspection of a 2007 detection tree, the initial find was located on private land near the town of Moran, within 1/2 mile of National Forest lands, including Wilderness, a Wild & Scenic River and candidate Research Natural Area lands. Since that time, the Forest Service has been working with APHIS and Michigan Department of Agriculture, the agencies responsible for quarantine and delimitation of the infestation. We anticipate they will meet in early January to determine treatment options. We'll continue to work with them as the size and extent of the infestation are determined.

Grand Island National Recreation Area

Alternative Transportation

in Parks & Public Lands

Grant -- through the Federal Transit Administration. We were awarded \$575,000 for a new on-island bus for tours (in partnership with AllTran), a new passenger ferry (in partnership with Grand Island Ferry Service), dock repairs & installation of accessible lifts on both sides. Visitor waiting areas will be added on both sides.

We put in a request for \$1.2 million for a 3-year program of work. We'll resubmit this year for year 2 for on-island maintenance building and fueling station. Year 3 we hope to replace North Light Creek Bridge.

Grand Island land exchange

– The Forest has been approached by the owners of a cabin on the island's "Thumb" regarding the sale and/or exchange of their property. Congressman Stupak's office was contacted by the potential sellers, and we have updated them on the process several times at their request.



Winter is here and cross country skiers are happily skiing along the Hiawatha's premier trails, including McKeever, Rapid River, Sand Dunes, St. Martin, and Valley Spur.

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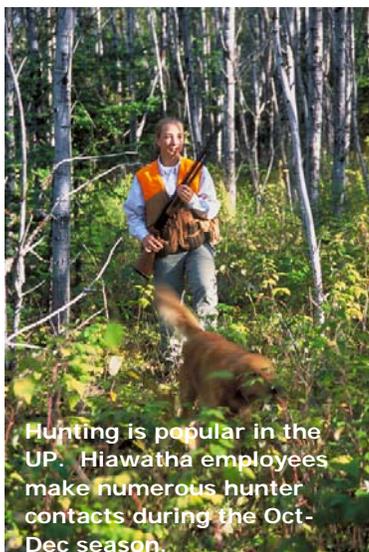
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On the Calendar

Date	Event
Jan 8	MICHNet call
Jan 19	Cross Country Ski Bash (Valley Spur)
Jan 23-24	Michigan Staff Officers Meeting
Jan 30-31	Hiawatha FLT Meeting
Feb 7	MICHNet call (also Mar, to be announced)
Feb 15-17	UP200 Sled Dog Race (Munising Ranger District)
Feb 23	Snowman Biathlon (Valley Spur)
Feb 20-21	Hiawatha FLT Meeting
March 1	Taste & Glide Event (Valley Spur)
March 9-10	Munising 300 Snowmobile Race
March 26-27	Hiawatha FLT Meeting

For more information about these and other events, call us or visit
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/hiawatha/events/>



Hunting is popular in the UP. Hiawatha employees make numerous hunter contacts during the Oct-Dec season.



Try your hand at ice fishing on the Hiawatha. It's an unsung "silent sport"!

Dick Anderson, our Best of the Best!



Snowmobile season is currently in full swing!

Parting Shots

NEPA Summary

Westside (Rapid River, Manistique, and Munising Ranger Districts)

Name of Project: Permanent Opening CE
Description: Routine wildlife maintenance activities. 700 acres/year for 5 years
Date of Public Release: Decision signed Dec 20, 2007
Appeal: Appeal period ends Feb 11, 2008. One received, but no more expected.

Name of Project: Beech Bark Disease CE
Description: Anticipated TPPS project
Date of Public Release: Collecting data FY08. Decision FY09.
Likelihood of appeal: Low/Medium

Munising Ranger District

Name of Project: Mirrorwood EA
Description: Vegetation EA
Date of Public Release: Decision FY09

Appeal: Unknown

Rapid River/Manistique Ranger District

Name of Project: Stockyard Jack Pine Stewardship CE
Description: Joint Kirtland's warbler/fuels reduction project. Stewardship and partnerships. Estimated 1.4 MMBF
Date of Public Release: Cancelled.
Category 10. Re-evaluating project.
Likelihood of appeal: Medium

Name of Project: Single Track Motorcycle Trail EA
Description: Construct a 26-mile single track motorcycle trail.
Date of Public Release: Scoping and 30-day notice & comment combined. Decision expected in Mar 08
Likelihood of appeal: High

Name of Project: Dutch Mill EA
Description: Vegetation Management
Date of Public Release: Scoping com-

pleted March 2007. Decision expected in Jun 08
Likelihood of appeal: High

Name of Project: Gooseneck EA
Description: Vegetation Management
Date of Public Release: Decision expected in Sep 08
Likelihood of appeal: Unknown

Eastside (St. Ignace/Sault Ste. Marie Ranger District)

Name of Project: Permanent Opening CE—East
Description: Routine wildlife maintenance activities. Approximately 5,900 acres of existing openings
Date of Public Release: Scoping/30-day comment period to begin in Jan 08. Decision expected Mar 08.
Likelihood of appeal: Low

St. Ignace/Sault Ste. Marie Ranger District

Name of Project: Sand Clay EA

Description: Large vegetation management project (and some non-timber-related activities). 49,000 acre analysis area with alternatives ranging from 17-19 MMBF
Date of Public Release: Second 30-day notice and comment period began Nov 2007. Decision expected Feb 2008.
Likelihood of appeal: High

Name of Project: Niagara EIS
Description: Large vegetation management project
Date of Public Release: NOI expected Jan/Feb 2008.
Likelihood of appeal: High

Name of Project: Lake Superior Highlands EA Revision
Description: Addressing beech bark disease
Date of Public Release: 30 comment began Nov 2007. New Decision expected Feb 2008.
Likelihood of appeal: Low