



San Juan National Forest Newsletter

Spring/Early Summer 2015

CONGRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER

Regional Forester's Honor Award

DURANGO - The San Juan NF shared a USFS Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Honor Award with partners this spring for launching the Four Corners Federal Lands Internship Program. Partners included the National Park Service, Fort Lewis College (FLC), Mountain Studies Institute (MSI) and Southwest Conservation Corps (SCC).

The program offers college students experience in resource-management careers. Agency mentors oversee the professional development of interns during 10-week summer internships.

"We thank our partners for bringing this opportunity to the agencies and the students," says Ron Duvall, San Juan NF Administrative Officer. "We couldn't have done it without everyone's support."

Last year's interns are now exploring careers in natural resources through additional classes, advanced degrees and seasonal jobs. New interns have already been selected for this summer.



(L-R) USFS Rocky Mountain Regional Forester Dan Jiron presents the Honor Award to Mesa Verde National Park Superintendent Cliff Spencer, SCC Executive Director Ron Hassel, MSI Executive Director Marcie Bidwell, SJNF Administrative Officer Ron Duvall, SJNF Supervisor Kara Chadwick. R2 Deputy Regional Foresters Maribeth Gustafson and Brian Ferebee also helped celebrate.

National Rise to the Future Watershed Resource Award

The San Juan NF was also honored this spring, along with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Trout Unlimited (TU) 5 Rivers Chapter and MSI for restoring the Colorado River cutthroat trout to a portion of its historic range on Hermosa Creek.

The USFS and CPW began work in 1991 to improve habitat, remove non-natives, and restore native cutthroat. Over the years, TU provided funding and TU and MSI volunteers helped with planting and stream improvement. The efforts have allowed genetically pure cutthroat to reoccupy 17 miles of their former habitat. Another benefit is that the project is being used as a working stream laboratory for Fort Lewis College students.

National Wildfire Mitigation Innovation Award

Pam Wilson, Former San Juan NF employee and current Executive Director for Firewise of Durango and Southwest Colorado Firewise Council, was honored this spring in Reno, Nevada.

Pam was one of 21 individuals and organizations selected by the Wildfire Mitigation Awards Committee for making a significant impact in wildfire preparedness and mitigation.

The Wildfire Mitigation Awards are jointly sponsored by the USFS and National Associations of State Foresters, International Association of Fire Chiefs and National Fire Protection Association.

The awards seek to increase public recognition and awareness of the value of wildfire mitigation.

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER

'Tis the Season ... Field Season!

A lot is happening on the San Juan ~ some highlights include:

- We recently hosted Directors and Deputy Directors from the Regional Office for our General Management Review - stay tuned for more to come on the results and action items.
- The Pagosa RD is wrapping up the Chimney Rock National Monument Management Plan and working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service on the Joint Chief's Project.
- The Columbine District is conducting public involvement for the Hermosa Creek Special Management Area Management Plan.
- The Dolores District is working with Montezuma County to identify the best path forward for recreation management at McPhee Reservoir and working through the Rico-West Dolores Travel Management Plan.
- The Forest continues with public input for developing a spruce-fir management strategy and kicked off the Recreation Site Analysis with a public meeting.
- We are saying good-bye to a number of valued, long-term employees as we bring on new and returning seasonal employees.

I realize how busy you all are and how difficult it is to take time out to think about our personal interactions, but it seems timely to talk to you about the agency's focus on Cultural Transformation, including the concept of inclusiveness. The Rocky Mountain Region's vision is: "To Create a Culture of Inclusion that Awakens and Strengthens All People's Connection to the Land." I ask you to take time to think about what this means to you. As I think about what this can mean to the San Juan, what comes to my mind is:



- Creating an environment where everyone feels safe and welcome.
- Treating all employees, partners and customers with dignity and respect.
- Providing the opportunity for employees to be successful.
- Embracing cultural diversity in our workforce and partners.
- Appreciating the diversity of backgrounds and diversity of ideas.
- Being open to learning, change and growth.
- Being accountable for our actions and always doing our best.

- Kara Chadwick, San Juan NF Supervisor

Travis Will be Here Soon

DURANGO - Travis Bruch - (pronounced BROOK) will arrive on the San Juan NF this summer as the new Timber/Fuels Program Manager. He'll be coming from the Bridger Teton NF in Jackson, Wyoming, where he has been Timber Program Manager.

Travis started his federal career in 1998 at the Rocky Mountain Research Station in Ogden, Utah, collecting forest vegetation data for Forest Inventory and Analysis.

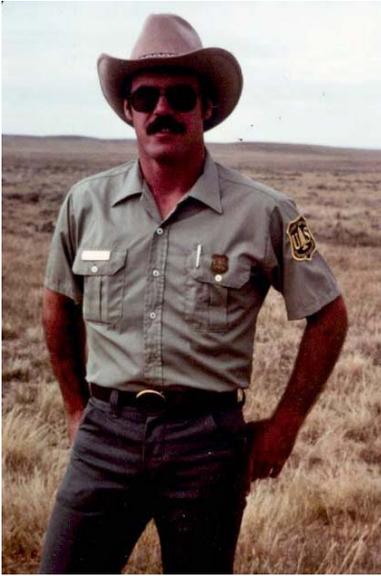
In 2000, he went to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in White River, Arizona, as a Presale Forester. In 2005, Travis became a Timber Management Assistant for the White River NF Rifle RD. He landed on the Bridger Teton in 2011 as Timber Program Manager.

Travis holds a Bachelor's degree in Forest Resource Management from Iowa State University. He and wife, Renee, have a dog, Max, and enjoy hunting, fishing, skiing, hiking and traveling. "I look forward to working in a great area with an active forest and fuels management program," he says.

- Ann Bond



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Tee Time for Tucker

DURANGO - Mark Tucker, SJNF Rangeland Management Program Lead since 2001, has retired after 30 years on the San Juan NF. Mark grew up on a small ranch in Livermore. His grandfather was a brand inspector, who conducted business on horseback out of Sacramento.

After serving in the Marine Corps, Mark graduated from Humboldt State University in Northern California with a major in Range Management and minor in Soil Science. He began his federal career in 1976 as a seasonal in timber, wildlife and range on the Sequoia NF.

In 1979, Mark headed to the Medicine Bow NF and Thunder Basin National Grasslands in Minerals and Range. In 1983, he was Resource Assistant for the Med Bow's Laramie Peak RD. He also became a Certified Professional in Range Management.

In 1985, Mark landed on the SJNF Dolores RD as Range Conservationist. He also served details on the Monti-LaSal NF as acting Monticello District Ranger and acting Range Staff for the combined San Juan/Rio Grande NFs.

One of Mark's career passions has been to increase awareness of noxious weeds. Over the years he negotiated many cooperative agreements with counties and partners.

"I'm proud of maintaining and improving partnerships and agreements with local cooperators, contractors and permittees to manage drought, invasives, fire rehab and other issues," Mark says. Retirement plans include golf, fire assignments and "being a tourist in the woods."
- Ann Bond

Rowdy Wood, former Columbine RD Range Lead, will fill in behind Mark Tucker on special detail as San Juan NF Rangeland Management Program Lead over the summer. Rowdy left the San Juan in 2009 and is now Range Staff Officer on the Lewis and Clark and Helena NFs. He started with the USFS in 1986 on the Bighorn NF as trails foreman and hotshot crew member.

Rowdy joined the Rocky Mountain Helitack crew on the Pike/San Isabel NFs, and later worked as Wildlife/Range Staff for the Comanche National Grassland. In 1991, he moved to the White River NF to handle range and outfitter/guide programs. He also worked on the Medicine Bow/Routt NF as Zone Range Staff before coming to the San Juan in 2001. Rowdy holds Bachelor's degrees in Wildlife Management and Range Ecology.



New Shots Onboard



Roy Vega

DURANGO - The San Juan Hotshots are pleased to have two new Senior Firefighters onboard this year. Roy Vega was a seasonal employee on the crew for three years and previously worked on Region 3 Hotshot crews and started on the Dolores RD. He is originally from Pagosa Springs.

Matt Terwilliger joined us from the Inyo NF in Bishop, California. He completed the Wildfire Apprenticeship Academy and has worked on engines, crews, and most recently, a helicopter module. He is originally from the San Diego area.



Matt Terwilliger

- Jay Godson, Superintendent, San Juan Hotshots

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Mike is Hanging up his Uniform

DURANGO - Mike Johnson, San Juan NF Renewable Resources Staff Officer, will retire at the end of May after 37 years with the USFS. Mike began his federal career in the 1970s as a seasonal soil analyst at the Materials Testing Lab in Missoula.

In 1978, he became Coconino Forest Hydrologist, and moved to the Nez Perce in the same position in 1981. By 1985, Mike was Regional Hydrologist in Region 1.

In 1988 he made his way to the San Juan as District Ranger of its former Pine District. Over the next 13 years, Mike saw the Pine merge with the Animas District to become Columbine.

In 2001, Mike became Renewable Resources Staff Officer overseeing the San Juan's timber, fuels, fire, range, invasives, wildlife, fisheries, watershed, soils, air and ecology programs. Over the years, he helped prepare the Northern San Juan Basin Coalbed Methane EIS, join and disband the San Juan and Rio Grande NFs, serve as Agency Administrator on the Missionary Ridge Fire, and complete the Forest Plan Revision.

"Rarely do individuals accomplish something alone, but rather as a team or group effort," Mike says. "I'm proud of contributing or helping, in some way, in the leading, guiding and shaping of this Forest over the last 27 years."

Mike holds a Bachelor's degree in Resource Conservation from the University of Montana and Master's degree in Forest Hydrology from Oregon State University.

He and wife, Susan, have two daughters; Kristina, 33, and Melinda, 32, who has accompanied her father on three Nepal treks. Over the last six years, they have trekked twice to Mount Everest Base Camp and once to Annapurna Base Camp.

Mike's retirement plans include more hiking, canoeing and traveling, and enjoying his grandson. *- Ann Bond*



Brenda Retires Too!

DURANGO - Brenda Rice (Schultz), USFS Law Enforcement and Investigations Special Agent stationed on the San Juan NF for 22 years, retired this spring. Brenda started her federal career in 1982 as a NPS park ranger at Curecanti National Recreation Area.

In 1988 she became a payroll clerk for the GMUG NFs. The following year she was assigned as a USFS law enforcement officer in Delta. In 1990 Brenda became a USFS Special Agent in Grand Junction, moving to Durango in 1992.

Brenda is a member of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group Investigation Subcommittee, and has traveled to Greece with USFS International Programs to teach wildland fire investigation. In 2012 she received the Secretary of Agriculture's Individual Achievement Honor Award.

Brenda holds a Master's degree in Geography Remote Sensing and a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Resources, both from Eastern Kentucky University. She also graduated from the Land Management Law Enforcement Training and Criminal Investigator Training programs.

Brenda was assigned to USFS investigations throughout the country. She led the team that successfully investigated the Hayman Fire and worked fire investigations nationwide, including the Missionary Ridge Fires on the San Juan. "I had the honor of working with talented federal employees on a variety of cases successfully prosecuted in Southwest Colorado," Brenda says.

- Ann Bond

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



(L-R) SJNF Hydrologists Shauna Jensen, Eric Herchmer and Joni Vanderbilt are now working out of the PLC under Kelly Palmer, Hydrology Program Manager.

Hydros Here to Help

DURANGO - Wallace Stegner, the great American author whose work celebrated the West once said; *"I was fascinated by how <the river> sped by, yet how it was always there."*

One could say something comparable about the talented team of hydrologists on the San Juan NF. Until now, they were spread across the Forest working out of the Districts, supporting District projects and restoring watersheds.

Today, they are still ready to support the Districts but are working under a Forest-wide Zone based primarily out of the PLC.

With the hydrologist vacancy on the Pagosa Ranger District, there was an opportunity to see if we could get Forest-wide hydrology needs met in a new way, while freeing up funds to do more work on the ground.

- Kelly Palmer



Mary Arrives This Summer

DURANGO - Mary Hammer will arrive this summer as the new San Juan NF Fishery/Wildlife Program Lead overseeing the fish and wildlife program, coordinating with RO staff on program matters, and serving on interdisciplinary planning teams.

Mary comes to us from the Salmon-Challis NF, where she was Fish and Wildlife Program Lead. She started her federal career as a BLM Wildlife Biologist in 2002 in Vernal, Utah.

In 2003, Mary went to work for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in California as Senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist. In 2010, she worked for the U.S. Army as Endangered Species Program Manager at Fort Hood. She also taught high school science for several years.

Mary holds a Bachelor's degree from Texas A&M in Marine Ecology and Wildlife Biology, and a Master's degree from Utah State University in Wildlife Biology.

Daughter, Violet, 3, is the light of her life. Rounding out the family are three dogs (two lab/border collie mixes and a boxer mix). Mary has

been involved in rescuing dogs from animal shelters for many years and other animal advocacy work.

She enjoys backpacking and hiking, exploring archaeological sites, gardening and quilting.

"I'm excited about meeting with the other biologists on the forest to discuss the program and how I can be of support to them in their work," Mary says.

- Ann Bond



San Juan Public Lands Center, Durango

SAN JUAN PUBLIC LANDS CENTER



Cam and Tim Doing Time on FLT

DURANGO - The San Juan NF Leadership Team (FLT) welcomed two new members-at-large earlier this year. Cam Hooley, Columbine RD NEPA Coordinator for the past 12 years, and Tim Leishman, Headwaters Headwaters Pre-Sale Forester, have bravely attended days (and weeks) of budget, leadership and program of work meetings.

"The experience has been very educational," Tim says. "My career background has been largely field based, so being exposed to budget processes and forest-wide decision-making has connected some dots for me."

"It's been interesting to see the intricacies of how everything we do across the Forest is interrelated," Cam says. "I'm enjoying

treading the middle ground between being part of management and being part of the rank and file."

The two are representing and reaching out to employees across the Forest.

"We're trying to make FLT meetings more transparent," Cam says. "I've gotten good feedback from my co-workers that they appreciate the added representation of the at-large positions. I encourage anyone to talk to us if they have questions or concerns about leadership issues."

- Ann Bond

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT

Hermosa SMA Planning Effort Underway

DURANGO - The Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection legislation of 2014 directs the USFS to complete a plan to oversee management for the 70,000-acre Hermosa Creek Special Management Area (SMA) within three years.

The SMA plan will consider overall direction for future management. It will also decide site-specific proposals for roads and trails. This would include what types of motorized vehicles can be used where and when, access to dispersed campsites, and designation of system trails.

The Columbine RD is now seeking public input on the scope of issues to be analyzed in the SMA plan.

A public meeting held in May was packed with a very interactive crowd of interested stakeholders. We discussed the legislation, current on-the-ground management and issues to be addressed in the planning process. Public scoping will continue throughout 2015, and a comment period on a draft plan will also be offered at a later date.

Other new designations in the Hermosa Creek Watershed will also require management plans. These include the Hermosa Creek Wilderness, also created by the legislation, and the Hermosa Research Natural Area (RNA), created in the 2013 San Juan NF Plan Revision. Both the Wilderness and RNA are outside the SMA.

-Cam Hooley, Columbine RD

National Environmental Policy Act Coordinator



HERMOSA CREEK WATERSHED

COLUMBINE RANGER DISTRICT

Beth Heads to Rio Grande NF

BAYFIELD - Beth Jones, Columbine Rangeland Management Specialist, departed the San Juan this spring to take the same position on the Rio Grande NF Saguache RD.

Beth began working on the San Juan in 2001 as a seasonal firefighter, and also served as Fuels Technician and Support Services Specialist. She began her federal career in 1998 as a seasonal firefighter at Zion National Park. She moved over to the USFS in 2001 with Durango Helitack.

Beth is a proud co-founder of the Southern Illinois University "Saluki Fire Dawgs," a student fire crew that plans and executes prescribed burns for several agencies in exchange for training and college credits. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Botany from Eastern Illinois University, and a Master's in Forestry from Southern Illinois University. Beth enjoys spending time with children, Kaia, 13, and Sam, 8. She also enjoys trail running and camping.

"I've enjoyed ending my tenure on the San Juan working with two great ID Teams on the Weminuche Grazing EIS and the Chimney Rock Management Plan," Beth says.

- Ann Bond



Bob Retires

BAYFIELD - Bob Dressel, Headwaters Timber Zone Forester, retired this spring after 31 years on the San Juan NF.

His duties included inspections, scaling, crew boss, timber sale preparation and administration on the Columbine RD, and related duties on neighboring national forests.

Bob started his federal career in 1975 as a NPS seasonal crew boss for a Youth Conservation Corps program in Pennsylvania. Over the next few years, he worked as a YCC crew boss on the Olympic NF and as Forest Technician on the Arapaho NF Sulphur RD.

In 1984 Bob landed on the San Juan NF as a Forest Technician, where he has been proud to help accomplish quality timber management. Bob says he was especially lucky to have spent most of his career in the field. His plans for retirement include enjoying life with wife, Patty, and family.

- Ann Bond

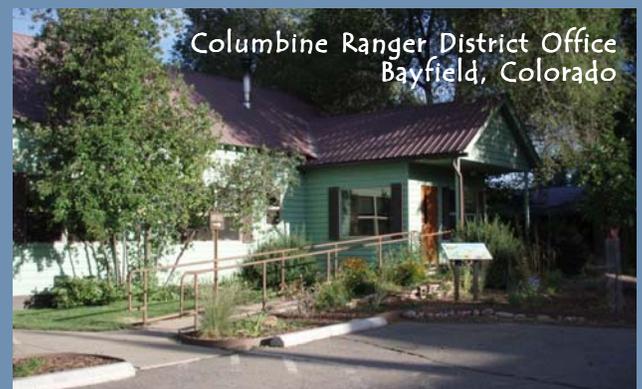


Former District Clerk Passes

DURANGO - Clara Vaughn passed away in December, 2014 at the age of 77. Clara worked for the USFS for 33 years and retired in 1994 from the San Juan's former Animas RD.

Former Animas District Ranger Ted LaMay says Clara was on the District when he first arrived in 1979. "She was a gem to work with," Ted says. "Clara did so much to keep the district running smoothly. She was one of the most capable district clerks that I had during my Forest Service career."

- Ann Bond



PAGOSA RANGER DISTRICT

Pagosa Area Awarded Farm Bill Project

PAGOSA SPRINGS - The Fourmile Fuels Reduction Project was named one of 15 projects across the country under the 2014 Farm Bill to receive funding to improve the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems where public and private lands meet. The San Juan NF and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will receive \$859,000 from USDA for fuels reduction on public and private lands northwest of Pagosa Springs. The public and private treatments will include mastication and thinning of shrubs, small trees and decadent aspen.



Large ponderosa pines, like this one next to SJNF Forestry Technician Jesse Jones, will be protected by further fuels-reduction efforts.

The Pagosa RD will receive \$611,000 to reduce fuels on 940 acres of public lands to protect natural resources and human uses from the threat of wildfire.

"This project will assist the community in affecting an important landscape on the District, and I would like to thank all of our partners in this effort," says District Ranger Kevin Khung.

The NRCS will receive \$248,500 to conduct fuels reduction on 150 acres of adjacent private lands in the Hidden Valley Ranch and Eagle Peak Ranch subdivisions, and large ranches.

"By working across public and private boundaries, we can help create resilient forests and support healthy watersheds," says NRCS District Conservationist Jerry Archuleta.

The project will build on earlier fuels-reduction efforts in the same area, including 160 acres of biomass removal under the Pagosa Area Long-Term Stewardship Contract, 20 acres of thinning on the Forest, and 450 acres of biomass removal on private lands by Southwest Conservation Corps.

The Farm Bill project was made possible with help from the San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership, Mountain Studies Institute, National Forest Foundation and State of Colorado.

- Ann Bond



Tim is Now Pre-Sale Forester

PAGOSA SPRINGS - Tim Leishman, formerly San Juan NF Headwaters Timber Zone Timber Crew Supervisor, is now Headwaters Pre-Sale Forester. New duties include timber-sale field preparation, crew oversight and task-order contracting on the Pagosa RD.

Tim started his federal career in 2008 on the Black Hills NF Northern Hills RD, moved to the GMUG NF Gunnison RD in 2010, and the San Juan Pagosa RD in 2014. He is an at-large member of the San Juan Forest Leadership Team and Board Chairman for a nonprofit river-restoration group in the

Gunnison Valley, *River Restoration Adventures for Tomorrow*. Tim holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental History, with a minor in Outdoor Education from Black Hills State University in Spearfish, SD.

Hobbies include fly fishing, rafting, hiking, biking, and playing with trusted side-kick, Porter the chocolate lab.

"I'm very excited for the opportunity to grow my forestry career on the San Juan," Tim says.

- Ann Bond



Pagosa Ranger District, Pagosa Springs

DOLORES RANGER DISTRICT



Frank Studying for Certification

DOLORES - Dolores RD Forester Frank Gonzales is attending the National Advanced Silviculture Program. This national program involves graduate-level short courses, including Ecological Systems at the University of Minnesota, Inventory and Decision Support at Oregon State University, Landscape Ecology at the University of Massachusetts, Advanced Silviculture Topics at the University of Tennessee. He will also attend a regional module in 2016. In conjunction with the course work, Frank must write and defend a prescription in front of a panel of experts. A successful outcome will see him become a Certified Silviculturist, which will allow him to write and sign vegetation-management prescriptions.

- Toni Kelly



Patrick is New District FMO

DOLORES - Patrick Seekins is the new interagency Fire Management Officer (FMO) for the Dolores RD and BLM Tres Rios Field Office. He comes from the Pike/San Isabel NF, where he was an interagency Assistant FMO.

Patrick began his USFS career in 2000 with the Blue Ridge Hotshots on the Coconino NF and spent most of the next seven fire seasons across the West. He also worked locally in mechanical fuels and prescribed fire.

In 2007 Patrick accepted an Assistant FMO position on the Angelina/Sabine NFs of Texas, focusing on fuels and prescribed fire. In 2010 he moved to Canon City as Interagency AFMO handling BLM and USFS wildfire suppression. In 2012 Patrick took a detail as Assistant FMO the Pike and San Isabel NFs. Originally from Homer, Alaska, Patrick grew up Camp Verde, Arizona. He and wife, Sunshine, have two boys; Trey,

13, and Tru, 11. Patrick enjoys hunting, fishing and camping.

- Toni Kelly



Zane Heads for Mesa Verde

DOLORES - Zane Muhonen, former Dolores RD Assistant Engine Captain, is now Lead Crewmember for Mesa Verde National Park Helitack.

Zane landed on the San Juan NF in 2009 with the San Juan Interagency Hotshots and then moved over to Dolores in 2011. In 2012, he received a permanent BLM position as an Assistant Engine Captain. In 2014, Zane switched back to the USFS as Assistant Engine Captain.

Zane started his federal career in 2006 as a Type 6 Engine and Crew member for the BLM in Monticello, Utah.

In 2008, he became a BLM Moab Helitack Crew member before coming to the San Juan.

- Toni Kelly



Dolores Public Lands Office, Dolores

<Former> MANCOS RANGER DISTRICT

Former Mancos RD Employees Honored

MANCOS - Betty Alexander, District Clerk on the San Juan's former Mancos RD 1966-1987, passed away in December, 2014. This spring, she was one of four former Mancos RD employees who were remembered at the USFS Memorial Grove near Monument, Colorado. Others honored were Jack Ott, forester; Lloyd McNeil, forestry technician; and Bud Roach, engineer.

Betty was a Mancos native and held a degree in Secretarial Science from Colorado Woman's College in Denver. While rangers would come and go, it was district clerks like Betty who provided the quiet leadership that kept many a district on a true and steady course. Betty was 90 at the time of her death.

- *Bill Ott, former SJNF employee, currently with WO Fire & Aviation Management*



L-R: Jack Ott, Don Hoffheins, Jack Fitzgerald, Sue Paradiso, Bernie Wiengardt, Jeanne Smith, Bill Schuster, Betty Alexander, Harry Moore, Rhonda Boyd, Chuck Bentzen in 1981.



Big Al Still Out on the Forest

MANCOS - For former San Juan NF Mancos District employee Al Lorentzen, there is nothing better than a roll through the woods. Al has been a paraplegic since 1988, when a tree fell on him while he was working for the USFS fighting fires in Wyoming. In 1993, the San Juan NF built the popular and fully accessible Big Al Trail leading to West Mancos Canyon and dedicated it to him. Today, Al boasts more time in the forest than most able-bodied men in the area.

"I probably get out three to four times a week and can cover as much as 6 to 8 miles, sometimes only a few miles, if the terrain is rough," Al says.

With the help of his friend, Joel Hoy, also of Cortez, Al wheels along roads, trails and meadows, while Hoy snaps pictures. The two carry radios in case either gets in trouble.

"He can just roll and roll," Hoy says. "We always meet up somewhere, or I can track him by following his trails."

After the accident, Al tried to return to work, but desk jobs were physically and mentally hard on him. He turns 61 in June. He was 39 years the tree fell on him.

"He told me once I saved his life by taking him up to the mountains after his accident," Hoy says.

The two friends have been going on trips to the mountains for more than 20 years.

"He used to get offended when people would stop and ask him if he was okay," Hoy says. "I had to beat him over the head and say, 'How many people in a wheelchair do you think they see out here? Let alone on a small road in the middle of nowhere? They are just curious.'"

- *Courtesy of Shannon Livick, as excerpted from The Mancos Times*

