

- Heart to Heart with Allen Nicholas, Forest Supervisor, Shawnee National Forest
- Employee Spotlight: Don Brown, Fleet Manager, Shawnee National Forest

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Southern Tier Forests

VOLUME 2, NO. 1

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE NEWSLETTER

Heart to Heart with Allen Nicholas

If I was addressing a group of people who were interested in applying for a job with the Forest Service, what could I say that would help them make the decision about applying for a job with us? I think it would help prospective employees to know what the Forest Service looks for in its employees. I believe this information would help them examine us as an agency and themselves as potential employees in making a determination relative to mutual compatibility.



Allen Nicholas, Forest Supervisor, Shawnee National Forest

I have worked for the Forest Service for 24 years and have seen many employees selected for positions. As a result, I believe I have gained a fairly good understanding of what the Forest Service looks for in potential employees.

Just like businesses in the private sector, we are looking for honest, smart, hard working employees who relate well to people and value their col-

leagues. Individuals who are highly qualified in their respective fields are a must. The ability to resolve issues and the willingness to step up to the plate and work toward issue resolution are traits highly sought after. An employee who not only supports agency goals and objectives, but actively participates in and contributes to meeting goals and objectives will go far in the agency. In other words, *provide added value.*

While performing your job is a primary expectation, many of the career enhancing opportunities provided by the agency will require you to make the decision to take on challenges that could be very different from your primary job. Make and take these (cont'd page 2)

Employee Spotlight: Don Brown

Don Brown has been the Forest Fleet Manager and Engineering Technician for the Shawnee National Forest since September of 2005. His duty station is the Shawnee National Forest Supervisor's Office in Harrisburg. Don has ten years of federal experience, not to mention twenty five years of active duty service with the Air Force retiring from Nellis

AFB, near Las Vegas, Nevada. Originally from Centralia, Illinois, he is excited to be back in Southern, Illinois, and the Shawnee NF is very fortunate to have him. On the Forest, he is valued for his knowledge and experience, his ability to take on new jobs and responsibilities and dependability, his ability to connect with not only other FS employees, but also the pub-

lic, and his positive and optimistic attitude.

Aside from the being familiar with the intricacies of fleet management, Don is also interested in encouraging area youth to consider education and career opportunities in the natural resources in the Great Outdoors. In October 2009, Don assisted with both the FFA National Conference and MANNRRS (cont'd page 3)

Heart to Heart (with Allen Nicholas, continued)



Allen with Harrisburg Twp. Recreation managers and Fish Biologist Mike Welker

opportunities. Taking on these challenges not only increases the scope and breadth of your knowledge and experience, but provides the agency an opportunity to examine your skills, abilities and willingness to take on more complex issues. Therefore, **seek challenges and networking opportunities.**

Given the diverse nature of the resources and issues we manage, there will always be something new on the horizon that will require us to shift our emphasis, sometimes rather rapidly. Be willing to change horses in mid-stream; that is, **be flexible and ask questions.**

Being goal orientated and a self-starter are also excellent

traits. Annually, we are measured by the accomplishments we achieve, so meeting targets and goals are extremely important to individual forests/prairies and the agency. **Use your skills effectively.**

Understand we are a bureaucracy and have extensive policy requirements for the actions we take. **Have patience and ask questions**

Training opportunities are both available and required and can improve your competitive edge as you progress in your career. Therefore, **continue learning**

So, what's in this for you as a potential employee?

- We are located coast to coast, metropolitan to coun-

try so the potential to work in various locations with differing community experiences is available.

- Benefits are excellent – Sick, annual and holiday leave as well as quality insurance is provided.

- Pay is good. In most locations we work, pay is commiserate with the local economy.

In many cases flexible work hours are available. Alternative workplace options are considered.

So from budget to butterflies, finance to fire, horses to helicopters and roads to restoration we have opportunities where your skills can be used. I encourage you to visit a local Forest Service office and talk to folks to get a real feel for the experiences we offer. Good luck .

Providing this opportunity for hunters is a good example of agencies working together to protect ecosystems across boundaries.

Hunter Safety Course hosted by Shawnee NF

On November 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2009, the Hidden Springs Ranger District of the Shawnee National Forest hosted a Hunter Education Safety Course sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The ten-hour course covered the basics of hunter responsibility, wildlife management, archery, muzzle loading, firearms, and ammunition

and state regulations. Twenty-two students were issued an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Hunter Education Card and patch.

The Hunter Education Course was taught by volunteer instructor Jim Richerson and Forest employees Tom Neal and Weldon Young.



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Employee Spotlight (Don Brown continued)



Don Brown taking with students at MANRRS conference at SIUC.

ment or related sciences had the opportunity to explore employment opportunities with various businesses, and government agencies from across the length and breadth of the United States, including the Southern Tiers Forests of the Eastern Region. Students from every state in the Union attended the event.

Later that month, Southern Illinois University and the Shawnee National Forest teamed-up to participate in the Regional Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

Conference in Carbondale, IL; approximately 500 students attended the day-long conference. At both events, material describing the STEP and SCEP programs was distributed to approximately 150 potential applicants. According to Don, “the MANRRS conference is the ideal venue for the Forest Service to develop contacts and recruit for future internships and jobs. We should be visiting more conferences like these in order to get the word out about what the Forest Service is all about.” He went on to say that “more Forest Service employees

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Regional conference. Don volunteered to talk with FFA students about potential career opportunities as well as hand out Forest Service Employer of Choice flyers and brochures. At the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Conference, 5,000 students studying and hoping for careers in agriculture, natural resource manage-



Shawnee Happenings

- SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST HOSTS ITS FIRST ENGINE ACADEMY** -- Last June, thirty-seven students participated in this week-long training from eight national forests, one tallgrass prairie, two National Parks Service units, two Fish and Wildlife Service units and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources from the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Iowa. This course, the first of its kind in the Eastern Region, was designed to improve the safety, efficiency and effectiveness of firefighters in the Eastern Area. Forest Supervisor Allen Nicholas reflected, “I appreciate the efforts all of the parties who participated in the planning and execution of this course. The instructors from the Shawnee, Hoosier, Wayne, Huron-Manistee and Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests, the Midwin National Tallgrass Prairie, the Williamson County Fire Protection District, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore and the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge did an outstanding job of presenting the training.” Training of this nature benefits the participants and their communities when the lessons learned are applied locally.

- JONESBORO LINCOLN DOUGLAS SESQUICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE WINS GOVERNOR’S HOME TOWN AWARD** – 150 years ago this past September, Abraham Lincoln and Senator Stephan Douglas met at a “grove of trees north of town” to debate the fate of the United States. This debate along with the other six of the series, catapulted Lincoln into the political limelight and made it possible for him to win the Republican nomination of the Presidency, and eventually the White House. That “grove of trees” is now the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger’s Office and also the Lincoln Memorial Recreation Area. The celebration planning committee, made up of many Jonesboro and Union County history enthusiasts and a Forest Service representative, was recently awarded a Governor’s Home Town Award presented in Springfield by the Governor last October. The state of Illinois annually presents these awards to communities that have volunteered their time, money and efforts to make their communities better places to live and work.



Shawnee Happenings (continued)



Robert Lewis, interpreter for the Cherokee Heritage Center of the Cherokee Nation

“One of his most memorable experiences was meeting General Franks, who was a four-star general for the United States Army.”

•**CHEROKEE STORYTELLER VISITS SO ILL.** In November, Robert Lewis, interpreter for the Cherokee Heritage Center of the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, traveled to southern Illinois to tell a story – or more correctly -- many stories. He performed at Pope County Elementary School, Shawnee Community College, Southeastern College, and Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He also participated in an impromptu story telling session at the Supervisor’s Office in Harrisburg. In all, Robert was able to touch over 1,000 individuals with his origin stories of the Cherokee world.

Robert was able to visit southern Illinois because of a partnership between the Shawnee National Forest and WSIU, the Broadcasting arm of Southern Illinois University. The Shawnee National Forest and WSIU are collaborating on a short film introducing the public to a significant episode in our nation’s history, the Cherokee Trail of Tears. The Trail of Tears extends across southern Illinois with several original segments of the trail being located in the Forest.

•**THE SHAWNEE GREEN TEAM** continues to work toward a greener tomorrow!



Hoosier Happenings

HOOSIER BUDGET OFFICER DOES DOUBLE DUTY Patrick McClellan, Budget Officer on the Hoosier National Forest, is also a member of the Air National Guard. Although it may be difficult for family, and friends, Pat easily slips between both duties.

Twenty-five years ago, on the advice of his dad, Pat joined the Air Force. By serving his country in the military, he had the opportunity to obtain valuable training experience, as well as an education through the G.I. bill. Currently he is a Master Sergeant in the Kentucky Air National Guard, 123rd Special Tactics Squadron, and is serving as a Logistics Specialist. Pat has also had training in aircraft maintenance, weapons loading, maintenance control, financial management, logistics, and chemical warfare. Pat has been on active duty in Qatar, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, and over the years he has been awarded more than 15 medals and ribbons. One of his most memorable experiences occurred while he was stationed at PSAB where he had the opportunity to meet General Tommy Franks, a four-star general for the United States Army. General Franks was the U.S. general leading the attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan in response to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and The Pentagon in 2001. He also led the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Pat has been the Budget Officer for the Hoosier since Dec 2005. He has degrees in Business, Logistics, and General Education. As required, Pat commits one weekend per month to the Air National Guard. He is happy that the Forest Service and his supervisor are so supportive of this commitment to the Air National Guard.

Thank you Pat, for your commitment to our country and to the Forest Service.

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Wayne Happenings

What does being Employer of Choice mean to you? Why do you work for the Forest Service?

Employees and potential employees have choices. When talking with potential new employees, either new to the Forest Service, or maybe just new to our Forest, a question is often asked that is something like: ‘Why should I work for the Forest Service?’ or ‘Why do you work for the Forest Service?’. As we think about the Forest Service and the Wayne National Forest being an Employer of Choice, it seemed like a good thing to know. So the question was posed to all WNF employees in October 2009. The following is a paraphrased sample of the answers received.



I live in it. I love it. ...I want it managed well. I want good people managing it.

- For me it is the mission of the agency. So I intentionally searched for an agency that had an overall mission I could support, and who needed my skill set.
- What that means to me is that we provide our employees a great work environment, good jobs and the equipment and supplies needed to get the job done.
- I didn't start out to work for the Forest Service like so many forestry graduates. I needed a job, so I answered an ad in the newspaper. It was my big stroke of luck. I have always been proud to say that I work for the Forest Service, although these days, I don't make much of it. So many people are working for low wages or out of work altogether. Now, what I value most is the security my job offers. I am proud of my 29-year career. The Forest Service is still a white hat organization to most Americans, no matter what the critics say. We may be misguided and somewhat wasteful at times, but overall, our mission and our accomplishments are positive.
- The Forest Service is my employer of choice because I love the out-of-doors. I love hiking in the woods, sometimes just watching the wildlife, and sometimes hunting it. When I first got interested in the Forest Service, many years ago, the people I was around were talking a lot about concerns with how the national forests were managed but no one was doing anything. I chose to get involved. I believed then and I continue to believe now, that my work could, and does, make the Forest Service a better place to work. Of course job security, a good wage, a decent suite of benefits is also important to me and to my family.
- An "Employer of Choice" to me is an agency which defines it's direction by complying with it's mission, providing stable direction, incorporating and adapting to change, proud of it's history, but cognizant that the past, while to be learned from is not a "guide" for the future.
- I tried for 8 years to get hired by the Forest Service in any capacity. After working in the private sector I really appreciate the work ethic that the majority of my Forest Service co-workers have. I greatly appreciate the advancement opportunities that the Forest Service offers it's employees. I also love being affiliated with an organization that provides access to outdoor spaces for those aren't fortunate enough to own some of their own.
- I work for the Forest Service because they allow employees to value their family.
- I wanted to work for the Forest Service because it was a respected agency whose employees could be counted on to do quality work to protect the land and serve people. My definition of an "Employer of Choice" is one who allows me to do the work I find rewarding, respects my knowledge, skills and abilities, and treats me as a valued person.
- I worked in state government, and part time in private industry and it was not a fun work environment for so many reasons! Sometimes I think that some of our employees don't know how good we have it! So much time off it is hard to use, flexible hours, benefits like you can't believe, security in knowing you will get and have a paycheck in the future.

**Wayne National Forest
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So why do our current employees work here: a great mission; working outdoors; value and respect for employees; job security; a good wage and benefits. Sure sounds like a place I'd like to work.

Monongahela Happenings

The partnership between the Monongahela National Forest and the Harper's Ferry Job Corps Center is still very new, but both the students and the Forest are already reaping benefits. Developing the partnership and getting work done on the ground is especially challenging given that travel time from the Center to the closest portions of the Forest is several hours.

In early summer the Forest held a week long basic fire school at the Center, aimed at introducing Job Corps enrollees to the art and science of wildland fire fighting, while training a cadre that could help with projects on the Forest and offer potential employment beyond the Job Corps experience; 15 corpsmen were qualified.

To date qualified Job Corps staff and enrollees have worked on two prescribed fires on the Forest. Job Corps, along with seven NPS firefighters from Harper's Ferry assisted the Forest on an eight acre burn at Cheat Summit Fort, one of the highest elevation Civil War encampments east of the Mississippi River. Prescribed fire is used to keep the grassy portions of the Fort open so that visitors can easily see the fortification outlines.

They also helped prepare hand line for a larger prescribed fire and in their "spare" time worked in the native plant garden at the Greenbrier Ranger District office. Job Corps firefighters have gained considerable exposure to the fire program and have learned skills that some may be able to apply in the future.

As part of the new partnership between the units, the Forest leadership team met in June of 2009 at the Center and explored options for other cooperative work between the two. The Center offers a number of skilled trade training, including carpentry, masonry, and tile work. Already members of the carpentry classes have built 250 cedar nest boxes used in the Forest wildlife program to monitor populations of a sensitive flying squirrel; helped put up some of those boxes in the woods; and replaced the floors on six rustic shelters in the Cranberry Backcountry. The roof work was very well received by users of the area, and plans are now in the works to have Corps members replace floors in some shelters in the future, which will bring these popular facilities up to date. Members of the masonry class are planning to build a foundation for a trailhead interpretive kiosk which will not only provide the public with information but will also showcase the skilled trade of the Corps.

As the Monongahela is learning, increasing the job skills of the Corps members requires thinking about getting the job done in different ways. The Forest purchased a brick saw to make it possible for the masonry class to do work in the future. A long time non-Forest Service firefighter became part of the firefighting training cadre in order to help make a connection with the enrollees. Forest and Center Leadership must think about transporting and housing enrollees; acquiring necessary materials and transporting finished projects; and how to approach safety and other training with an audience much different than the traditional FS employee. However, from the finished work on the ground and the often huge smiles on the faces of the Jobs Corps members accomplishing the work, the efforts are worth it.



Job Corps hits the Ground

As the Monongahela is learning, increasing the job skills of the Corps members requires thinking about getting the job done in different ways.

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Mark Twain Happenings

Ozark Timberfest Oct. 2-3, 2009 Re-Enacts Timber's Role in Community History by: **Charlotte Wiggins**

Re-enactment of a 1920's logging camp is part of a two-day festival.

Southern Missouri Ozarks played a major role in the westward expansion of the nation by providing hardwood railroad ties.

Three years ago, Mark Twain National Forest's Eleven Point Ranger District became involved with the Ripley County Chamber of Commerce, Ripley County Commissioners, state and federal agencies and local businesses, to celebrate the history of the area and its relationship to forest management.

Ozark Regional Timberfest builds pride in a small rural community, enhances residents' "sense of place", and provides an educational outdoor experience.

Eleven Point Ranger District employees and Mingo Job Corps students work in cooperation with the Ripley County Chamber of Commerce, private citizens, local, and state and federal agencies to plan and organize this event, which has three goals: 1) To celebrate this event in a way that would aid the local economy; 2) provide an educational link to the past; and 3) reconnect people to their communities and to the outdoors.

Ozark Timberfest is a two-day event during which cooperators provide festival goers a glimpse of the past through historical re-enactments of a traditional logging camp from the 1920's. There are audience events that include outdoor sporting games such as logging relays, traditional tool competitions, chainsaw events; traditional skills seminars featuring tie hacking, blacksmithing, horse logging, wood carving, and sponsored booths and food vendors.

As part of this event, one day is dedicated to providing students opportunities to learn by doing and viewing. Nearly a thousand children from local schools are bused in on the first day. Students are taught by Forest Service employees how to use a traditional outdoor logging tool, the cross cut saw, and are given the sawn slab with "USFS" branded into it as a souvenir.

The Eleven Point Ranger District, in addition to assisting with the planning of this event, also contributes through living history. Employees in historically-accurate dress and accurately-depicted artifacts operate a logging camp from the early 1900's. Employees have demonstrations of cross cut sawing and tie hacking. A family tent also recreates living conditions in the early 1900s.



Theresa Wooldridge, left, and Mark Twain Ranger Tim Bond cook bacon and white beans at Timberfest 2009.

The "Timberfest" event was conceived and developed to recognize this history and to reconnect the people to their communities and the outdoors.

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401 Fairgrounds Rd.
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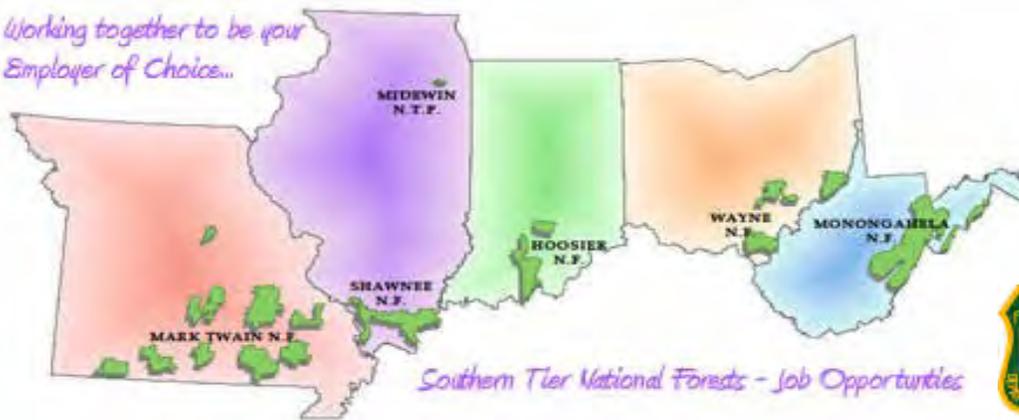
Forest Service Job Website:
www.fs.fed.us/fsjobs

Apply on-line:
www.avuedigitalcentral.com



Jo-el Loyal, Wilmer Scott and Theresa Wooldridge demonstrate using the crosscut saw.

Working together to be your Employer of Choice...



Southern Tier National Forests - Job Opportunities



Southern Tier Employer of Choice Champions

- Jane Mobley, Mark Twain National Forest
- Paul Strong Mark Twain National Forest
- Mary McCorvie, Shawnee National Forest
- Marlene Rivero, Shawnee National Forest
- Ken Day, Hoosier National Forest
- Ruth A Siddens, Hoosier National Forest
- Judi Perez, Hoosier National Forest
- DeVela J Clark, Wayne National Forest
- Robert M Gianniny, Wayne National Forest
- Steve Marchi, Wayne National Forest
- Jerri Marr, Monongahela National Forest
- William Dunk, Monongahela National Forest

Including many other contributors ...

- Mary McCorvie, Author and editor, of the V2, No1 - Issue of So. Tier Forests (Jan. 2010)
- Teena Ligman, Hoosier Happenings article
- Kathleen Goodrich-Arling (*R09_MNF article*)
- Jeremy Vaughn, GIS Specialist, SHF
- Weldon Young, L.E.O., SHF

Our gratitude and thanks go out to all others that have supported us in so many ways!

Share your ideas! The Great Outdoors is a Great Place to Work!



There are many more EOC products that can be developed to share across the Southern Tier Forests. Please share your ideas with your committee members on the Shawnee, Hoosier, Mark Twain, Monongahela and Wayne National Forests. Let's join together to highlight our successes and share information across the Southern Five Forests of the Eastern Region.



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