



USDA FOREST SERVICE

Southern Tier Forest News

FALL / WINTER 2010

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE NEWSLETTER

Each issue features a different southern tier national forest. This issue was prepared by the Wayne National Forest

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Spotlight on the Wayne National Forest

Ohio's only National Forest celebrated its 75th anniversary in November 2010, and will continue the celebration into 2011. On November 12, the anniversary date of the acquisition of the first parcel of National Forest land in Ohio, many employees performed community service. They volunteered at a local food bank (see photo), a hospice facility,



and an emergency services warehouse. A spring 2011 event is planned to honor our partners and retirees.

As Forest Supervisor, I emphasize three primary priorities that define what the Wayne is all about:

RESTORATION, which includes watershed restoration work on abandoned mine lands, and sustaining an active effort to restore the oak ecosystem.

RECREATION, which includes promoting safe and legal off highway vehicle use, updating our signature recreation facilities, and interpreting the rich history and



Jo Reyer, Forest Supervisor

ecology of southeastern Ohio.

COMMUNITY, including doing work with partners, combining forces with other agencies, being involved in natural resource and environmental sustainability efforts locally and statewide, reaching out to urban Ohio, and being an employer of choice.

(cont p2)

Employee Snapshots: Dawn McCarthy and Carol Boll



Dawn McCarthy—As a newcomer to the Forest Service in September, I'm very happy to have been chosen as the new Assistant District Ranger for the Athens Ranger District. I am excited about establishing a sustainable recreation program on the district, and feel confident in our abilities due to my highly capable staff and the cooperation of the Athens District and Supervisor's Office.

As a native of West Virginia, I grew up next to the Monongahela National Forest. From a family of nine, most family activities involved family drives, camping, and hiking in the outdoors. These experiences with the natural world led me to desire a career in forestry early in life. After an enlistment in the Marine Corps and experiencing life, I completed a B.S. in Biology at Fairmont State University in 2001

(WV), followed by a Ph.D. in Forest Ecology at Ohio University in 2008. While finishing my graduate degree, I worked briefly at the front desk of the Wayne NF. In 2007, I started working with the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) as a Plant Protection and Quarantine Officer for the Emerald Ash Borer Project. During my 3.5 years with APHIS, my office was located in the Supervisor's Office of the

Spotlight (continued)

Dale Newell



The Wayne works hard to be an employer of choice.

In the last issue of the Southern Tier Forest News, we featured several of our newest employees. One of them, Nicole Stump, recently had the opportunity to accompany Wayne group leader Carleen Yocum on an international assignment to Peru. Carleen, a former Peace Corps volunteer, is a veteran of many international assignments with the Forest Service. (See the related article on page 3.)

In this issue, I'd like to congratulate five employees on their recent or upcoming retirements: Athens District forestry technicians Gary Cravens and Dave

Greenwood (Marietta Unit) earlier this year, Ironton District assistant ranger for recreation Marsha Wikle at the end of October, and as 2010 draws to a close, our Fire Management Officer Kevan Moore and regional appraiser Dale Newell will be retiring. Dale was a Wayne NF employee for much of his career, and works from our Nelsonville office.

In my own 30+ year Forest Service career so far, I've had a whole variety of occupations. From Young Adult Conservation Corps enrollee and crew leader, to forestry technician (recreation, wild-life, fire), to environmental coordinator, public affairs officer, assistant district ranger, district ranger, group leader in a Supervisor's Office, regional planning director, to these past two years as a forest supervisor. Many

of our employees are dedicated to one or two program areas throughout their careers and become our valued experts. But for you generalists out there, there are also amazing career opportunities.

Most of my career has been in northern states. Let me tell you some of the things I enjoy most about working in the Southern Tier: the wonderfully diverse ecosystem of Appalachia, the fascinating history and culture, the long spring and autumn seasons, the proximity to the Southern Region, and most of all the fantastic coworkers here on the Wayne National Forest.

*Jo Reyer,
Forest Supervisor*



Dave Greenwood and Kevan Moore



Marsha Wikle and Gary Cravens



Employee Snapshots (continued)

Wayne NF. As the lone member of APHIS in the office, members of the Wayne took me in and treated me like one of their own.

Carol Boll has returned home as the new Assistant District Ranger on the Ironton Ranger District for the Wayne National Forest. In 1980, she actually started her career on the Ironton Ranger District as a seasonal recreation/forestry technician under the supervision of Tommy Eaches. Tommy was also her mentor and is working on the district today. She says, "Tommy taught me all the important things I know about the Forest Service."

Carol studied Forestry at Hocking Tech College and earned a Masters in For-

estry at West Virginia University, after earning a Bachelor of Science in Recreation from Ohio University. Her adventures with the Forest Service took her to five National Forests – Wayne-OH (both Ironton and Athens Districts), Hoosier-IN, Huron-Manistee-MI, Big Horn-WY, and Homochitto-MS. Throughout her 30 year career, Carol's duties included recreation, timber, mineral, range, water, fisheries, and wildlife. Carol is looking forward to being home and working with old and new friends on the Wayne National Forest and in the local community.

Carol talked of her experiences within the agency. "During my thirty year journey, the most ideal job that I had was as a member of a trail crew in the Cloud Peak Wilderness on the Big Horn National Forest in Wyoming. The most exciting experience was



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Employee spotlights (continued)

planning and supervising the construction of a 1000-acre lake and the surrounding recreation area in Mississippi. The most complicated job was leading the implementation of the *Travel Management Rule* and *Motor Vehicle Use Map* on the Huron-Manistee National Forests, because of the 3,000 miles of road and 520 miles of motorized trails. The best part of my journey with the Forest Service has been the people I worked with and wonderful variety of individuals I have encountered."

Wayne Employees on International Assignments

The USFS, through its International Programs (IP), has been assisting the Peruvian government over the last year to enhance forest sector governance, promote sustainable development in the forest sector, and encourage legal trade in timber products. The Peru Forest Sector Initiative, (PFSI) has been evolving with the IP and its partners since 2004. Through funding from the US Agency for International Development, the project provides technical support in a variety of areas including forest management, information management and forest inventory.

IP taps into the nearly 30,000 employees of the FS, FS retirees, and contractors to meet these needs. Though FS personnel offer transferrable professional and technical skills they often lack foreign language and overseas experience. Carleen Yocum, Wayne Operations Group Leader has been active in the PFSI from the beginning. She did four short assignments from June-October assisting with the development and implementation of regional forest authorities. Carleen compares these to State DNRs. She is currently on a 120-day detail through March serving as the In-Country Coordinator.



Carleen explains an effort this year with the PFSI to enhance successional planning for employee participation in international work. Specifically, Nicole Stump a young GIS specialist on the Wayne new to international work joined her on a shadowing assignment. The objective of Nicole's participation in the trip to Peru was twofold: to contribute to the design of a training component dealing with spatial information management, and to experience a somewhat facilitated entree to USFS international work by accompanying someone with extensive experience. This experience proved a positive one for Nicole and enriches her career development.



Nicole Stump, WNF in the Peruvian Amazon, July 2010. Above shown with Carleen Yocum (2nd from left) in the Amazon rain forest.

Nicole stated, "This unique and exciting opportunity allowed me to experience another culture while at the same time contribute my skills to the conservation of tropical forest resources. I gained a new perspective on forest management and the many challenges faced by the Peruvians. Participation in international programs has been a highlight in my employment with the Forest Service and I look forward to future opportunities throughout my career."

The Forest Service faces a challenge as a significant proportion of its highly experienced workforce approaches retirement age. A number of efforts to develop leadership within the agency, and to recruit and retain productive employees have already been initiated to address this situation. The IP has several additional challenges to confront---including foreign language needs, and a relatively low profile compared to other FS programs. The work of the IP is more pertinent than ever as global issues such as climate change and homeland security provide a forum for demonstrating the value of Forest Service international assistance. Additionally, in an age of globalization, Forest Service employees' professional careers and contributions to resource management are enhanced with this type of interaction. The PFSI provides a good opportunity to extend the 100+ years of domestic experience of the US Forest Service, and introduce some new, qualified Forest Service individuals to international work.

Carleen Yocum worked in forestry extension in the Peace Corps in Costa Rica in the 80's. It was a natural progression for her to connect with the FS's International Program. Twenty-five years later, Carleen considers that work some of her most rewarding. "Witnessing the challenges faced by natural resource professionals in developing countries and understanding the direct ties between healthy ecosystems and sustainable development inspires me to work internationally."

Shawnee NF Happenings

Response to an Email - Thank You from Regional Forester, Connaughton

"Marlene,

Thank you for being such a capable spokesperson for Employer of Choice and such a wonderful example of excellence in public service. I appreciate the tee shirt, literature and pecans! Take care and keep up the good work".

Kent P. Connaughton,
Regional Forester

On November 10th, Kent P. Connaughton, Regional Forester reviewed the Southern Tier Employer of Choice (STEOC) program at the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger Station, Jonesboro Illinois. My life experiences, both personal and professional, are shared through my participation in the Employer of Choice Program in an effort to make a difference in the lives of young and old alike, regardless of ethnicity or gender. I want to make prospective employees aware of the many challenges and opportunities, as well as the great rewards of working in our national forests. From my experiences as a young person coming up in the Forest Service, I know firsthand the power and influence of efforts such as the STEOC outreach program in making a difference in someone's life (sometimes a tremendous difference). This is why I "give back" through the Employer of Choice projects as well as personally investing in others.

During the last two years, the STEOC Team has produced a series of quality marketing tools directed at prospective employees. We have created, consolidated, and improved several media products such as an Employer of Choice: 1) CD, 2) booklet, 3) travel display, 4) brochures, 5) slap card/book mark, 6) website, and of course, 7) the EOC Southern Tier Newsletter, all of which were developed for public outreach purposes. I would like to thank you, Mr. Connaughton, on behalf of the STEOC program members for your kind and encouraging words. There are many other contributors (you know who you are) also included in this "Thank You" because they too have been supporters, representatives, employees, and managers of the Forest Service's vast resources and responsible for the program's success. By working both individually and together to package outreach information and create information sharing tools, we the STEOC team have become leaders in making the Eastern Region's Employer of Choice vision a reality. As underserved populations become more aware of the Forest Service's "fringe" benefits of working in the Great-Out-Doors the team hopes to increase not only the physical diversity of the agency, but also diversity of thoughts. Our hopes are that one day that the workforce is as diverse as the landscapes we manage and the people we serve.



Marlene Rivero
with her Southern
Tier display

Playing a role in the preservation of this nation's beauty and the conservation of its resources for future generations has great rewards, and can be personally satisfying. Through the STEOC program we are revitalizing the Forest Service's mission by reminding the public of the many employment opportunities existing within these naturally beautiful areas. The products the STEOC has developed are being used to brand the FS with a new image in an effort to attract a new, diverse generation of employees. By utilizing modern technology, we are letting a wide variety of the public, especially young people, know they can have hopes and dreams of working in such beautiful environments. More importantly, the positive effects of an agency with a diverse workforce will last for generations.

Kent, once again, your gratitude and support is shared and appreciated with all the champions working toward the success of the STEOC program. /s/ Marlene Rivero

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Native American Fire Crews Help Fight Record Breaking Wildfires

On November 9, 2010, a small fire was spotted on the west side of the Shawnee NF, in the area hardest hit by storms in spring 2009. The 2009 storm wreaked havoc on the landscape, leaving the area littered with downed trees which have been drying for over a year, and leading to a potentially volatile situation.

Engine Crew – E5862 from the Menominee Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin from northeastern Wisconsin was the first on the scene at the Grassy Knob fire. They had spotted the smoke and were quickly in place for initial attack. The fire grew during the overnight hours to include 100 acres as it fed on the dead and down timber.

Eventually the wildfire grew to include 409 acres. With a helicopter, 5 engine crews, a hotshot crew from the San Bernardino NF, and a number of other specialist positions, including the Engine Crew from the Menominee Nation who had arrived here in southern Illinois early in November.



Shawnee Beartown Firefighters

George Korn, Bruce Kaquatosh, and Phillip Waukau are all part of the engine crew that traveled to southern Illinois to help with fire suppression activities. Although the engine crew is a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) crew and not FS, it does demonstrate that we can and should manage ecosystems across traditional boundaries, both physical and cultural.



Menominee Firefighters on the Shawnee

The Menominee Nation has had a fire program since the early 1990s. The Engine Boss George Korn began as a structural fire fighter, but now is entirely involved in wildland fire fighting. He remembers when he first started, he would just show up, be given a tool and be assigned to a fire. Things have changed a bit since then. When not on detail, the 5 engines and 9 PFTs work on Menominee Nation lands doing prescribed fire trying to accomplish the same ecosystem management objectives on the reservations 235,000 acres as we are in southern Illinois. The Menominee Nation offers the basic 130/190 classes every year and have had about 250 individuals go through their program.

Another BIA resource, a Type 2 hand crew from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Lake Superior Band of Chippewa Indians also spent some time on the Shawnee NF this fall. The crew, based out of Baraga in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and known as the Beartown Firefighters, were in southern Illinois from October 26 to November 3.

Since 1948 when the first Native American fire crew was formed, thousands of American Indian firefighters have battled forest and wildland fires across the US. That first year, fewer than two dozen Mescalero (Apache) Red Hats joined the national firefighting community, but today there are more than 6,000 American Indian firefighters spread across the country, including Mike Bittner, an Ojibwa tribal member from Minnesota. Mike has been a seasonal fire fighter on the Mississippi Bluffs Ranger District for the past two years and was also a helitack crew member on the Salmon-Challis NF last summer.

Mark Twain NF Happenings!

Mark Twain Forest Heritage Program Volunteers

Fifteen Passport in Time (PIT) volunteers, two historic preservation specialists from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), one Mountain Heritage enterprise team historic preservation specialist, and several Mark Twain National Forest personnel helped to restore Falling Spring cabin and mill.

Accomplishments at the cabin included graffiti removal mainly from the interior; replacement of milled 4 x 8 timbers with more historically-accurate sill logs; flooring and porch repair using rough cut boards, and installation



Fifteen Passport in Time volunteers restore a cabin and mill at the Falling Spring site, a historic Ozark homestead on Eleven Point Ranger District.

Heritage Program Volunteers — Continued

and leveling of additional dry laid foundation stones and entry steps. Accomplishments at the mill included siding and flooring repair, and stabilization of loose structural elements.

Falling Spring cabin and mill are part of a homestead established in 1851. A single crib log cabin (c. 1860) and a mill structure (c. 1927), complete with Pelton wheel, remain of what became a diverse farmstead. One of the PIT volunteers is a descendent of the family that originally homesteaded the property.

Two of the volunteers are locals, several traveled from various towns across Missouri to participate, and volunteers also trekked from Arkansas, Colorado, Minnesota, and South Carolina to donate their time and energy to help preserve a slice of Ozark history.

The cabin and mill are located within the Falling Spring picnic area, situated just south of Winona, Missouri, on Mark Twain National Forest's Eleven Point Ranger District. The picnic area is open to the public year round.

"Mark Twain National Forest appreciates the contributions of this remarkable group of heritage program volunteers," said Mark Twain National Forest Supervisor David Whittekiend. "The work completed this spring at Falling Spring will benefit the public for generations to come."



Teresa Chase

Coming soon to the Mark Twain....

Forest Supervisor Dave Whittekiend is pleased to announce the selection of Teresa Chase as the new Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Mark Twain National Forest. Teresa comes to us from the Hiawatha National Forest where she is the District Ranger on the Munising Ranger District.

Administrative Sites and Recreation Area Improvements by CASP/Bethel Fellowship Group

The Ranger Districts on the Mark Twain benefited from the accomplishments of Bethel Fellowship and Conservative Anabaptist Service Program Groups. The Ava/Cassville/ Willow Spring (ACW) District appreciated the opportunity to host the Bethel Fellowship Crew for a week. They were very professional and pleasant to work with. Mike Stewart and James Murrell from ACW were their work leaders. They accomplished a lot of work; fixed the roof at the Noblett new pavilion, stained the Noblett old pavilion, repaired and stained picnic tables, replaced all the parking barriers adjacent to the entry road into Noblett, cleaned out the old walkway from the new pavilion to the lake (shown in picture to left) - now people know there even is a walk way there. At North Fork, they did trail maintenance on the Blue Spring Trail by re-positioning and cleaning the rocks, put up new signs, brushed the camp sites back, replaced old wooden steps at the beach area, and replaced shingles on the kiosks in campsites.



Neighbors of the Salem Ranger District expressed their appreciation for the work performed by the Bethel Fellowship Group. The group was asked to cut out vegetation along 1,600 feet of fence line. Later it was learned that the vegetation was so overgrown it was impeding the vision of drivers on S. Washington Street from viewing oncoming traffic at the intersection of S. Washington and W. Roosevelt Streets. Ranger Haines said "At first I was just thankful for the work they did, but it appears we have also improved traffic safety"

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Mark Twain Happenings (continued)

Eleven Point Ranger District received a new roof on the Winona warehouse (shown at right).

The Poplar Bluff Ranger District received a new roof on their administrative office, and warehouse by the CASP Group.



CASP did an erosion control project by constructing new steps, and completed rock work. They also relocated a pavilion to the Markham Springs Recreation Area (pictured at left).

District Rangers Tim Bond, Doug Oliver, Jenny Farenbaugh, and Thom Haines expressed their appreciation for the work ethic, safety and quality workmanship of the Groups.

We would like to remind the Region that the Conservative Anabaptist Service Program group has 15 different service groups available for program year 2011.

Driest Fall Fire Season on Record for the Mark Twain

Since October 18, firefighters have responded to 71 wildfires (plus at least 5 county/state assists) that total about 3400 acres of national forest and private lands.

Below normal rainfall for most of the summer into the early fall lead to severe drought conditions for parts of southeast Missouri. Rainfall deficits on the Mark Twain National Forest have been most pronounced during the past four month period. The drought resulted in early curing of understory vegetation



and grasses, as well as early leaf fall, foliage drying on woody stems, extremely low duff moistures, and low dead fuels moistures. Days of high winds and low relative humidity will keeps the fire danger in Very High to Extreme until significant precipitation.

In November, 19 days had new wildfire starts. On the days when we did not have new starts, we were busy mopping up fires from previous days and chasing smoke.

Six days had wildfires larger than 100 acres. We have had a total of 9 large fires ranging from 108 acres to 657 acres. On November 4 and November 5, we had 2 fires each day that were over 200 acres each.

Our largest single day total was about 1150 acres (11/4/10) and our largest number of fires in one day was 10 on 11/7/10.

Off Forest resources that were brought in included: 1 Type 3 helicopter; 1 Type 1 Crew; 1 Type 2 IA Crew; 1 Safety Officer; 2 Division Supervisors; 7 Type 6 Engines; 1 IA Dozer + operator & swamper; and 1 IA Dozer operator. We also had one on-forest dispatch detail to MOCC to assist in IA Dispatch.

Mark Twain NF Fire Management thanks each of those who were involved in any way in fire suppression this fall. While firefighting is difficult and dangerous work, it also brings camaraderie, shared experiences, and sense of responsibility for each other's safety are difficult to duplicate in other settings, and create a bond that is unique. Our passion for what we do is evident in each firefighter and support person. It is this passion for accomplishment, each other, and our mission that makes the Forest Service an outstanding employer of choice.

Smoke at Council Bluff (right) and a hot fall wildfire pictured at left



Employees Continue to Work on Storm Salvage Recovery



Storm damage along Forest

A year and a half after the May 2009, straight-line winds and tornado blew through south-central Missouri, knocking over and damaging trees across hundreds of thousands of acres employees are still working on storm recovery. The National Weather Service's Weather Forecast Office in Paducah, Kentucky described the May 2009 event as "tearing a path of destruction from Perry and northern Bollinger Counties of Missouri east across the Marion/Carbondale area to near Harrisburg, IL. Frequent, widespread gusts from 80 to 110 mph damaged over 10,000 homes in Williamson County alone. One fatality and numerous injuries were reported."

In 2009 the Forest utilized permits and small sales to open roads and start clearing road right of ways. This process allowed for the trees to be salvaged rather than the material go to waste.

In 2010 the Salem and Potosi/Fredericktown districts initiated salvage sale projects to recover as much of the blown down timber as possible. They offered 30 million board feet of blown down timber, nearly doubling their normal program. Employees' from across the forest chipped in to help with the extra work. Timber marking crews worked diligently to prepare the sales through the tangled mess of trees on the ground. These sales all sold and are now being harvested. This salvage operation is not only an effort to utilize the trees but also removes fuels in areas to help provide fuel breaks to prevent potential wildfire occurrences. This has already proved to be beneficial when one fire occurred in the blow down area.

The project is not completed yet. The Salem District is planning to prepare and sell an addition 15 million board feet of blow down salvage in FY 2011.

This is only one example of how a day in the life of a Forest Service employee is never the same as the last. It also serves as an example of how when faced with challenges and hardships-Forest Service employees continue to pull together as one to efficiently and effectively manage our nations precious natural resources for the benefit of the American public now and for generations to come. So the work continues...

Hoosier NF Happenings

Hoosier hosts Pilot Frontcountry Training

The Hoosier National Forest hosted a pilot training course on Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics specific to frontcountry stock use. Frontcountry refers to areas generally accessed by day use visitors. The course was the first of its kind and served as a tool in revamping Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics concepts and practices to better educate horseback riders on frontcountry use and minimizing resource impacts. "The goal of the Leave No Trace program is to eliminate avoidable impacts and minimize unavoidable impacts caused by recreationists," according to Ben Lawhon, Education Director for Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

Frontcountry class



The course took place during the last week in September and included one day of classroom instruction followed by four days and nights of field instruction at Blackwell Horsecamp on the Hoosier. Bob Wagner of the Backcountry Horsemen of America, as well as instructors and staff set up camp in advance. This included wall tents and a kitchen/cooking area. Meals were prepared by Gini

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Hoosier Happenings (continued)

LaMaster, also a member of the Backcountry Horsemen of America.

Upon registration participants were assigned a teaching topic directly related to one of the principles of Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics. Over the next three days each participant, with an instructor serving as a mentor, presented information regarding their assigned topic. This allowed for participants to gain experience in teaching a component of Leave No Trace as well as an opportunity to receive constructive feedback from the incredible cadre of instructors. With an open group discussion encouraged at the completion of each presentation, participants and instructors alike were able to mesh ideas and discuss ways to educate horseback riders effectively and practically. Since this was a front country stock course the Hoosier's mules were utilized for demonstrations throughout the week; proving to serve as excellent teachers themselves! At the end of the week each participant was instructed to create an action plan illustrating goals for promoting and teaching Leave No Trace. This served as an exceptional tool for sharing ideas and formulating attainable goals.

Employee Snapshot: Chalonda Jasper

Chalonda previously served as a Soil Scientist Trainee for the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. Some of her duties there included, Acting Soil and Water Program Manager, oil and gas concerns, and monitoring forest activities to protect forest watersheds. She received a Bachelor's degree in Plant and Soil Sciences from Southern University and A&M College in Baton Rouge, LA. While receiving her B.S. degree she began her FS career in 2002 as a R8 Soil Science STEP on the Francis Marion and Sumter NF. The next summer she was converted to a Botanist SCEP on the Cherokee NF. She also received her Master's degree in Plant and Soil Sciences from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, FL. Chalonda accepted a Soil Scientist position on the Hoosier NF in September 2010. She is currently assisting the eco team with Watershed Condition Classification and protecting forest watersheds on both districts.



Monongahela NF Happenings

2010 Youth, Volunteer, and Hosted Programs Exceed 41,000 Hours

Eric Sandeno, MNF recreation program leader and coordinator of the Forest's Youth, Volunteer, and Hosted Programs (YVH) is still amazed at the total number of hours of work on the Monongahela logged by members of the public in 2010. Every unit in the Forest reported YVH work, for a total of 41,873 hours. The previous year's total of 33,629 hours represented a significant contribution to the management of the Forest, but the 2010 figure was even better.

Volunteers, AmeriCorps members, Job Corps members, Youth Conservation Corps crews, and prison crews all made contributions. The largest single unit reporting hours was the White Sulphur unit of the Marlinton-White Sulphur Ranger District. Recreation technician Matt Edwards oversaw both campground hosts and members of the Anthony Correction Center work crews. Those two segments of the YVH program provided more than 20,000 of the 41,000+ hours in 2010.

Sandeno noted that working with partners and providing opportunities for the YVH program takes a lot of extra time and coordination. He expressed his appreciation to all of the Monongahela employees who helped make the YVH program so successful in 2010. It'll be tough to top that number in 2011, but you can bet the Forest will try to do so.



WO employee Tim DeCoster spreads composted manure in a new native plant garden at Stuart Recreation Area in the Monongahela.

Saying “Thank-you” to Employees



(L-R) Group leaders Jack Tribble, Debra Holler, and Nadine Pollock thank SO employees for their work in 2010.

Knowing that food is one of the best ways to gather people together, three members of the Monongahela National Forest’s leadership team expressed their appreciation to the employees in their groups at the end of the fiscal year by hosting a luncheon. Supervisor’s office group leaders Nadine Pollock (natural resources group), Debra Holler (administrative and engineering groups), and Jack Tribble (ecosystems group), provided meat dishes to a luncheon to celebrate the end of the fiscal year. Ever-willing to have an excuse to eat, SO employees rounded out the event with other food contributions. All three group leaders then took a moment to thank their staff for the hard work of the preceding year and the successes to which the employees contributed.

Collaboration in Action: Monongahela’s new Partnership Specialist

Evan Burks, one of the Monongahela’s newest employees, is an example of the often less-than-straightforward paths many new employees take on their way to joining the Forest Service. A native of Cary, IL Evan attended Earlham College in Richmond, IN and earned a degree in International Relations and Spanish. Unfortunately he graduated at the bottom of the economic downturn when there were few jobs available. He spent the summer after college graduation working with his father as a recruiter in the chemical, pharmaceutical, and health care fields, and in a micro-brewery and a dog kennel, all while searching for a full-time job.

While in college, Evan worked in a variety of community service positions as one of the conditions of a scholarship he was awarded. Somewhere in the process of working at a local art museum, at a public access TV station, at a senior citizen assistance program, and as an English tutor to Spanish-speakers he became aware of the AmeriCorps program. After not being able to find a permanent job following graduation Evan realized he could continue to wait tables and do other odd jobs, or pursue the opportunities provided through AmeriCorps to gain additional marketable job skills. Accepted into two AmeriCorps programs, he chose to come to West Virginia and work with the Appalachian Forest Heritage Area (AFHA). The Monongahela National Forest serves as a sub-sponsor for AmeriCorps members through AFHA. Evan was one of the first two AmeriCorps members working on the Forest, and he left big shoes for others to follow.

He spent his AmeriCorps service working out of the Supervisor’s Office as an ecological technician. He participated in botany surveys, and acoustical monitoring for bats as well as started the Regional Garlic Mustard Challenge. One of his jobs was working with a consortium of partners interested in the ecology of the highest elevations of the Forest. Originally dubbed the High Elevation Conservation Working Group, the effort is now known as the Central Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (CASRI) which has rapidly become a regional success. Through his work with CASRI Evan was well-acquainted with The Nature Conservancy’s West Virginia office. Following the end of his AmeriCorps service Evan became a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) volunteer with TNC.

Evan’s ability to pull together partners and events relating to his work with both AmeriCorps and VISTA was duly noted by many of the partner groups with which he worked. It finally culminated in a “real” job when he was recently hired as a full-time federal employee on the Monongahela as a partnership liaison specialist, working on CASRI and similar projects. The position is collaborative in all aspects, funded as it is through the Forest Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge, the US F&WS West Virginia Field Office and The Nature Conservancy’s WV office.

Evan is happy to have a real paycheck, and real health benefits but he most looks forward to expanding partnerships, community involvement and continuing his public service for natural resources of the mountains of West Virginia.



Evan Burks leading one of his many garlic mustard “pulls” to reduce the impacts of this non-native invasive on native vegetation.

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From West Africa to West Virginia

For Job Corps enrollee Paul Almona, the Forest Service represents opportunities he might otherwise have never had. Currently based out of the Monongahela National Forest's Supervisor's Office where he is completing the work-based learning portion of his education, Almona is excited by his training in fire management, and wants nothing more than a job as a Hot Shot or to attend the Fire Academy.

Born in Benin City, Nigeria and raised in Delta State, Nigeria Almona was just 9 when his father moved the family to the United States. They first lived in the Philadelphia area and then moved to Delaware. A naturalized U.S. citizen, Almona attended high school both in Delaware and for a time back in Nigeria. Following high school graduation he found it hard to break in to the job market. Rather than settling for a low-paying job he decided to take advantage of the training and skills offered through the Job Corps. He came to the Harper's Ferry, WV Job Corps Center just at the time the facility was being shifted from the U.S. Park Service to the Forest Service, with the Monongahela as the connected Forest.

After spending time in the business, masonry, and carpentry programs at Harper's Ferry, Almona found his niche when the Monongahela offered a basic fire fighting course at the Center. From the beginning of his fire training Almona knew the job was a good fit for him. Fire fighting allows him to be outdoors and do a physical job, while learning and seeing different aspects of forest management.

Since completing his basic firefighter course, he has served on fires in North Carolina, and on prescribed fires in West Virginia. He also attended an advanced forestry course on the Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina, learning many different aspects of the forestry program. To fully complete that program Almona is seeking a STEP or permanent FS position.

As part of his work-based learning experience on the Monongahela he has helped with timber marking, preparation for prescribed fires, and is gaining experience in engine operation and maintenance. Almona will leave the Monongahela in mid-December but is expected to come back to the Forest for the spring fire season.



Paul Almona in the hills of the Monongahela National Forest.

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*Thanks to others who 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 Hoosier, Mark Twain, Monongahela, Shawnee, 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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