

SourDough Notes



U.S. Forest Service
Alaska Region Newsletter
Volume 5 Issue 1
Winter 2009

ON THE COVER:

A contractor crew installs stream grade control weirs at Marx Creek near Hyder, Alaska, to improve salmon spawning habitat.

Photo by John Lang. Story begins on page 3.

SourDough Notes

Quarterly newsletter for the U.S. Forest Service Alaska Region P. O. Box 21628 Juneau, AK 99802-1628 http://www.fs.fed.us/r10

Winter 2009

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Submissions: SourDough Notes is written for people interested in the Alaska Region. Your suggestions, articles, and photographs are welcome. Please contact:

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Articles should be no more than 800 words and may be edited. Submitted articles may not all be printed. Submitted digital photos should be sent as high resolution TIF or JPG. Please contact the Public Affairs Office if you have questions.

INSIDE :

Table listing various articles and their page numbers, including Strickland Recognized, Navigation at Pack Creek, and others.

Strickland Recognized



Deb Strickland is congratulated by Chief Gail Kimbell for receiving the 2008 President's Call to Service Award.

In October, Agriculture Secretary Edward T. Schafer announced that Regional Office Procurement Analyst Deb Strickland was a recipient of the 2008 President's Call to Service Award, "in recognition and appreciation of your commitment to strengthening our Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service."

The award is given for 4,000 hours or more of volunteer service over a lifetime; Strickland has donated 22,500 hours, beginning in 1989.

In service to youth, Strickland was a Special Olympics ski coach and a Girl Scout leader. She also gave over 3,000 hours to the Montana Hope Project initiated by the Montana Highway Patrol. It is a program to give critically

and chronically ill children a special dream come true and to offer families an annual weekend reunion. Wishes granted included shopping sprees, camping trips, hot tubs, restoring a '34 Ford, Caribbean cruise, horse buggy, meeting celebrities, entertainment centers, video games, computer systems, professional athletic events, dream bedrooms and trips to Disney World and Disneyland.

Strickland's valuable talents have also led her to work as an EMT, an ambulance volunteer, and in search and rescue. She is called upon in her Forest Service job to be a trainer and an emergency responder in the Juneau Federal Building. Congratulations, Deb, for this significant recognition.

There's a New Place to Spawn in Hyder

By John Lang and Carol Denton, Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

Since its construction in the 1980s, Marx Creek has been very productive, providing an attractive spawning environment for thousands of chum, pink, and coho salmon every year. Recently, however, silty glacial water from the Salmon River has begun seeping through the dike between the river and the upper reaches of Marx Creek. As a result, the quality of the gravel in upper Marx Creek is deteriorating, and leading to a loss in salmon productivity. The Pacific Salmon Treaty specifically identified chum salmon originating from streams in Portland Canal as stocks that “require rebuilding” and the treaty annex directed both U.S. and Canadian agencies to undertake assessment of these chum salmon runs to identify possible measures to restore and enhance them. The Marx Creek chum salmon’s parent stock, in nearby Fish Creek, is identified as a sensitive species in the Tongass Land Management Plan, so it is important to maintain productivity by providing enough high quality spawning habitat.

In 2005, Ketchikan/Misty Ranger District, in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, submitted a project proposal to the Pacific Salmon Commission to address the silt issue and improved water quality and spawning success for chum salmon in the upper reaches of Marx Creek. With \$500,000 from the Pacific Salmon Commission’s Northern Fund and the know-how and guidance of Tongass engineer Bob Gubernick, the latest phase of the Marx Creek work was completed in June and July 2008. Returning Marx Creek chum salmon have approximately 26,000 square feet of new spawning habitat. A portion of the old channel, similar in size and located adjacent to the flood control dike, was back-filled to control seepage and siltation. The project took three years to design and implement with final construction costs totaling \$367,000.

According to site visitor Ellen Martinson (NOAA Fisheries), “the new spawning channel is quite impressive. Water temperatures at the gravel surface in the new channel ranged from 4.1C at the head to 6.3C at the mouth, optimal temperatures for chum salmon spawning.”

Top: Water is pumped into adjacent vegetation during construction. Photo by Carol Denton. Middle: Carol Denton checks construction progress. Photo by Bob Gubernick. Bottom: A portion of new spawning channel in the upper portions of Marx Creek. Photo by Carol Denton.



Aleutian Terns: Declining Population and the Role of the Forest Service in Alaska

By Susan Oehlers, Nate Catterson, Sanjay Pyare, and Mike Goldstein

Winter seemed a bit reluctant to unleash its hold on the Gulf Coast this past April. A big low came spinning ashore, and rain, wind, and surf battered the shores of Black Sand Spit near Yakutat, Alaska. When the wind abated, and we were able to cross the Situk River Estuary in our small boat, we found the sky over the Spit was alive with lithe wheeling and diving forms. The terns had returned!

Two species of tern nest on Black Sand Spit every summer. One is the Arctic tern, whose epic trans-hemispheric migration makes a dramatic stormy spring arrival seem appropriate. The other is the Aleutian tern, a colonial nesting seabird of coastal Alaska and Russia, of which little is known. This species is also found on the Cordova Ranger District on National Forest System lands outside of Yakutat. Besides limited colony

counts, very little is known about the breeding ecology of this species, and essentially nothing is known about the winter distribution of Aleutian terns, except anecdotal observations of the species in Southeast Asia during the non-breeding season. (Aleutian terns are a bit like some Yakutat seasonal employees: when winter rolls in they disappear out of Yakutat and we don't really know where they go or what they're up to. Jetting through Hong Kong, or perhaps hanging out with common terns in the Philippines?)

The Aleutian tern colony on Black Sand Spit on the Yakutat Forelands is one of the largest in the world, supporting up to 3,000 Aleutian Terns, or one-third of Alaska's population and a significant proportion of the global population. Aleutian terns were documented on the Spit as far back as 1923, and the colony appears to be stable despite apparent declining populations elsewhere within Alaska. The prevalence of the Avian Influenza A (H5N1) in Southeast Asia, coupled with potential impacts of human disturbance, are potential risks to Aleutian Terns. This species is designated as a species of concern by several agencies and non-government organizations, including the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Audubon Alaska, the U.S.



An Aleutian Tern sitting on a nest at Black Sand Spit. Photo by Mike Denega.

Fish and Wildlife Service, and The North American Waterbird Conservation Plan. The terns are being considered as a Forest Service Sensitive Species. In part because of the large population of Aleutian Terns found there, Black Sand Spit was named as an Audubon Important Bird Area (see *SourDough Notes* Winter 2008 Issue).

Beginning in Summer 2007, Forest Service biologists from the Yakutat Ranger District and Regional Office worked collaboratively with ADF&G, USFWS, the City and Borough of Yakutat, Audubon Alaska, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, and the University of Alaska Southeast to identify specific conservation concerns and develop a management priority list. This interagency "Aleutian Tern Working Group" identified the need to develop an accurate population estimation method as the highest priority for managing the species. We then further developed this project idea, and in collaboration with UAS, applied



Derek DeRaps samples an Aleutian tern nest. Photo by Mike Denega.

for and received an ADF&G non-game wildlife grant. The grant primarily supports district wildlife technician Nate Catterson to implement the project as a graduate student in partnership with Forest Service funding.

In 2008, we implemented a set of survey methods to evaluate the Aleutian Terns on Yakutat's Black Sand Spit and near the Italio River on the Yakutat Forelands. Our intent was to develop a statistically robust method to monitor Aleutian Terns, and that this method would be transferable to other colony sites. We completed a series of ground measurements, and the data analyses are forthcoming. We also tried to determine whether aerial monitoring was cost effective. The Forest Service San Dimas Technology & Development Center provided camera equipment for aerial photos and the ADF&G provided funding to retrofit a local plane and for air time. The jury is still out, but suffice it to say that aerial surveys on Black Sand Spit were complicated.

We also collaborated with undergraduate Derek DeRaps. UAS, in conjunction with the National Science Foundation's Research Experience for Undergraduates, brought Derek from the Georgia Institute of Technology for a summer intern program working with the Forest Service in Alaska. Derek collected nest characteristics of Aleutian and Arctic Terns. He collected data to model the variables that statistically separate the nests



Eileen Henniger and Derek DeRaps collecting tern egg and nest information. Photo by Mike Denega.

of the two species. Derek's results will allow us to monitor terns more effectively; using his models, we can better estimate the distribution and population size of each species. Data analysis is underway, and the resulting protocol will be applied to Black Sand Spit and other known Yakutat and Cordova Ranger District colonies during the 2009 field season, in combination with our ground survey technique. Ultimately, our goal is to provide an effective methodology that is transferable to other sites, to better assess the population status of Aleutian terns throughout their Alaskan range.

This project serves as an example of the multi-stakeholder collaboration needed to address a statewide conservation need, applied at the area of greatest concentration of the species. We hope that this project will inspire further partnership building between Forest Service and other conservation stakeholders within the State of Alaska and beyond.

Partners in Alaska: The Youth Restoration Corps



The Youth Restoration Corps received special recognition in 2008 by Alaska Governor Sarah Palin for their contributions to the restoration of Resurrection Creek. For the past 11 years, YRC, working in partnership with the Forest Service and other agencies, has contributed to the restoration of nearly 13 miles of spawning and rearing habitat and some 300 acres of flood plain habitat in Southcentral Alaska. The Corps said such restoration work demonstrates that "stewardship is cool people doing cool things for a cool purpose."

Ibeck Creek Streambank Revegetation Project

By Ken Hodges, Fisheries Biologist, Chugach National Forest

Ibeck Creek is one of Cordova's favorite spots for coho salmon fishing. Tourists and local anglers alike enjoy the plentiful fish and the scenic views of the Scott Glacier. But by the end of the last few seasons, instead of an Alaskan wilderness, the trampled banks of the Ibeck looked more like a Wyoming cow pasture.

The Cordova Ranger District is trying to restore the scenery and habitat with a project designed to replace the vegetation and stabilize the streambanks. Surveys showed there were long sections of collapsed bank where the angler-created trail was next to the edge of the bank and the vegetation had been destroyed. This not only looks bad, but the fish habitat and cover associated with undercut banks were being lost. Additionally, vegetation hanging over the stream is a source of insects and other invertebrates that fall into the water and provide food for fish. This was being lost as well.

We needed to replant the banks, but, as Alaska Department of Fish



Sections of stream bank have collapsed where angler-created trails run next to the edge of Ibeck Creek.

and Game biologist Brian Marston pointed out, the large herds of anglers might just trample everything we planted. Barbed wire fences have been used to protect riparian areas in the Lower 48, but we opted to plant young Sitka spruce, which are just as prickly, but more eco-friendly. The idea is that spruce planted along the bank will hold the soil together with their roots and their sharp needles will force anglers to walk farther inland away from the fragile banks.

This summer, a Forest Service crew and three Student Conservation Association volunteers—Bryan Alexander, Andrew Deaett, and Adam Miller—revegetated a mile-long section of stream. Sitka alder, willow, sweet gale, and native grasses were planted along with the spruce to increase the amount and density of vegetation. Gaps were left between treated areas so anglers can still access the creek to fish, especially where there were pools, woody debris, or other fish-holding habitat.

We also put up some temporary green plastic fencing (yes, a necessary evil) that will protect the plants until the spruce are established.

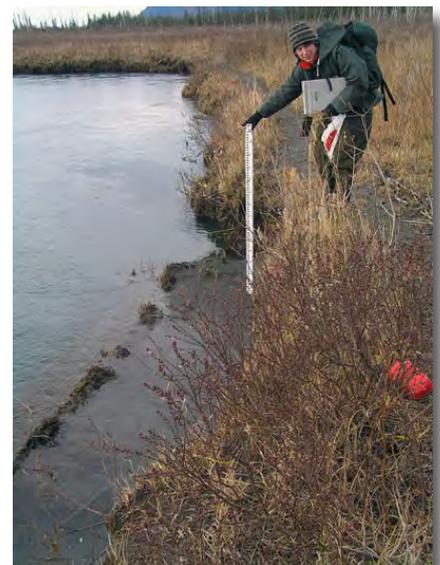
In the future, we will monitor the sites to see if the revegetation has helped to stabilize the banks. Before we started planting, and with the help of Marston, we documented the location of actively collapsing banks with a GPS unit, and measured their lengths and distance from the trailhead with a hipchain. Photo points were established for before and after comparisons.

So far, the results look good. Although the anglers didn't like the cool, wet summer and fall, the crews didn't have to do any watering, and the spruce survival is close to 100%.

The increased vegetation and the evergreen Sitka spruce should make the area appear less desolate, especially in late fall. The vegetation should also help to screen the view of other anglers, so the creek appears to be less crowded, even though other people may be fishing just a short distance away.



SCA volunteer Bryan Alexander plants willow and alder along Ibeck Creek.



Sue Farzan measures a section where foot traffic destroyed vegetation

Planes, Trains, Automobiles, or....

By Ed Grossman, Wilderness Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District

Planes, trains, and automobiles...or, helicopters, bicycles boot leather, and landing craft! What's left, livestock? When you work on the largest Forest Service ranger district in America, on the biggest national forest, within the most expansive state in the union, you need to be creative in how you get around. Juneau Ranger District trail and cabin crews have honed their logistical talents to maintain some of the highest used facilities on the Tongass.

Some district cabins are used more than 200 nights annually, and crews maintain over 130 miles of historic hiking trails, many of which lead to those cabins. If you want to visit glaciers, lakes, rivers, or the alpine, we have a trail to get you there, and quite possibly a cabin in which to stay. With this widely varied maintenance responsibility, high public use, and our short field season, we need to know how to efficiently pack for a trip, and be prepared to use many forms of transportation.

This past season was particularly challenging as the crews were split up to better cover the diversity of projects. Rob Morgenthaller and crew dove into intensive deferred maintenance projects at West Turner Lake and Eagle Glacier cabins, while Steve Stoddard and crew took on all remaining cabin maintenance projects. This left Marc Scholten and crew to keep up with the campgrounds and day use recreation areas. Peter Cross and crew tackled not only trail maintenance, but also began constructing the Nugget Falls Trail at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. The Nugget Falls Trail quite possibly may become the highest use trail on the Tongass when completed next summer.

Some projects needed many forms of transportation to move materials and crews. For example, crews needed helicopter, landing craft, floatplane, and boot leather support at West Turner Lake Cabin. Work at Windfall Lake Cabin can involve helicopter, plane, bicycle, jet boat, and boot leather support. They say variety is the spice of life.

One of the district's more unique annual maintenance missions involves a very historic mode of transportation. Laughton Glacier and Denver Caboose cabins and trail systems near Skagway are accessed aboard the White Pass & Yukon Route narrow gauge railroad. Constructed 100 years ago to reach the Klondike gold fields, the WP&YR became known as the "Railway Built of Gold." This company has worked cooperatively with the Forest Service to provide transportation of crews and materials to these scenic sites for years. This year the railroad dedicated a flatcar to the crews, meshing Forest Service needs with their busy tourist schedules. The Denver Caboose cabin is the real deal donated by the railroad and converted to a public use cabin by the Forest Service, making for quite a unique facility on the Tongass. You should consider checking it out.



Top: Rob Morgenthaller, Steve Stoddard and John Hill load the boat at the Taku Glacier Cabin.

Middle: John Hill, Aaron Yeaton, and Steve Stoddard ride the White Pass & Yukon Route train bound for Laughton Glacier trail and cabin.

Bottom: Denver Caboose cabin near Denver Glacier trailhead. Photos by Ed Grossman.

Oh, and should you have a spare horse, burro, or llama, our folks can probably put it to work (no jackasses accepted).

Colonial Seabirds as Architects of Small Island Vegetation

Russia-U.S. Botanical Research in the Alaska Region

By Karen Dillman, Tongass Nat'l Forest; Erin Cooper, Chugach Nat'l Forest; and Melissa Cady, Tongass Nat'l Forest

The Alaska Region's magnificent array of flora and fauna left visiting botanist Dr. Elena Glazkova sleepless for a week after her return from Alaska this summer. Elena is a researcher from the Komarov Botanical Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia, who specializes in colonial seabird nesting habits and the



Glaucous Winged Gull nest on St. Lazaria Island constructed from grasses and other plants and surrounded by nitrogen-tolerant lichens on rocks.



Caspian Tern nest with egg.

impacts these birds have on the vegetation of small marine islands in the Baltic Sea. She is also a participant in the U.S.-Russian Botanical Exchange Program, which was born out of a general scientific agreement between the two countries signed in 1972 and revised in 1994. The purpose of this scientific exchange program is to increase U.S.-Russia field studies and communication between scientists concerning expeditions, exchange of herbarium specimens, and collaborative botanical research. The Tongass and Chugach National Forests hosted Elena through contributions from the U.S.

Forest Service International Programs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of International Conservation, and the Ecological Society of America's Foreign Scientist Travel Program.

Many ecological factors affect small island flora with large seabird colonies in different regions of the world; from the geographical position and size of the islands, the diversity of their climate and landscapes, to the population number and the species composition of nesting birds. Elena is a leading authority in recognizing the spatial patterns and impacts of ornithophilous (or guano-loving) plants on small islands where colonial seabirds nest. Some areas in the nesting sites are higher in nitrogen and phosphorus than others, and only certain plants can withstand these high levels.

Small island fauna and flora can also be disproportionately impacted compared to mainland biota due to invasive species introduction. Invasive plant movement to pristine areas of Alaska has accelerated over the years due to human introduction coupled with changing climatic conditions that favor the dispersal of many species. Limiting in Alaska is the documentation and monitoring of invasive plant passive migration



Dr. Elena Glazkova collects plants associated with the next form the Glaucous Winged Gull colony on St. Lazaria Island near Sitka.

to pristine areas due to the consumption and excretion of plant propagules by birds and mammals frequently using an area. In Russia and Finland, invasive plant species have migrated to small islands, most likely due to influence from the nesting colonial seabirds. In some instances, colonial seabirds such as cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis*) are increasing in numbers in the Baltic and it is unclear yet as to why.

To our knowledge, no one has looked at the relationship nesting seabirds have with the vegetation on small islands in Alaska. Using three pilot test sites, our efforts to bring Elena and her research ideas to Alaska were to: 1) determine if small island vegetation in Alaska is influenced and impacted by the nesting habits of colonial seabirds; 2) document the native and non-native plant species found to be ornithocoprophilous; 3) document what plants are being used by colonial seabirds for their nest construction; 4) select monitoring sites in the Region for future collaboration with the Russian-Finnish monitoring program; and 5) begin to document native and non-native vegetation patterns on small islands due to the influence of the seabirds.

The small islands visited that have active colonial seabird nesting areas were Egg Island and Kokenhenik Bar on the Copper River Delta near Cordova and St. Lazaria Maritime Wildlife Refuge near Sitka. Plant surveys



False Lily of the Valley (Maianthemum dilatatum) on St. Lazaria Island exhibiting gigantism due to high nutrients near storm-petrel burrows.

were conducted and samples collected. Preliminary results indicate that the vegetation around the nesting sites of Glaucous-winged Gulls (*Larus glaucescens*) on Egg and St Lazaria Islands contained plant communities influenced by the presence of the seabirds. Plant diversity was lower within the nesting sites than other parts of the islands and some species showed signs of gigantism (the appearance of abnormally large leaf surfaces and longer stems), indicating that high nutrient levels are affecting their establishment and growth.



Wildlife biologist Erin Cooper hikes toward the Caspian Tern nesting site on Kokenhenik bar.

One difference on the Alaskan islands compared to similar sites in Russia is that no invasive plants were found in the nesting areas surveyed. The nest bowls appeared to be constructed of plants collected on the islands by nesting birds, primarily grasses, mosses, and other plants with delicate leaf structures. One interesting exception to these results is from Kokenhenik Bar which hosts both nesting Glaucous-winged Gulls and Caspian Terns (*Sterna caspia*). Glaucous-winged Gulls have most likely always nested on the barrier islands of the delta (hence the name Egg Island) but their population appears to be increasing, possibly due to the increasing supplemental food source from the Cordova canneries. The nesting area for the Caspian Tern was only recently discovered and studies of this colony are in the preliminary stages. The nesting area vegetation on Kokenhenik Bar was first documented as part of this project, and to date only two plant species are known to occur on this island. This island is an excellent candidate for long term monitoring of vegetation introduction and succession due to the influence of the nesting birds. The Tongass and Chugach National Forests will continue this relationship with the Komarov Botanical Institute to publish results from this preliminary work and plan for future comparative botanical studies.

Effectiveness of Canopy Gaps: Creating Winter Forage for Sitka black-tail Deer

Michael Ausman, Wildlife Technician, Thorne Bay Ranger District

This summer marked the first of a two-year study focused on monitoring the effectiveness of canopy gaps in creating winter forage for Sitka black-tail deer on Prince of Wales Island. Funded by a Collins Grant awarded to The Nature Conservancy, the project is a collaboration between The Nature Conservancy, the Thorne Bay Ranger District, and the Prince of Wales Tribal Enterprise Consortium, a tribally-owned corporation contracted to hire the field crew.

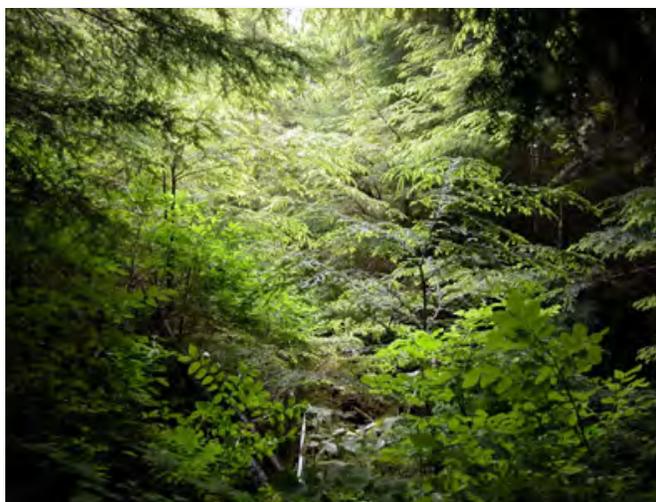
In the mid- to late-1980s small canopy gaps were implemented in 26- to 36-year-old young-growth stands on Prince of Wales Island. Estimates of the number of gaps installed range from 600 to as many as 900. Most of the gaps were created simply for application sake with no thought to future monitoring, so many sites lack location information. Designed to simulate natural wind disturbance, these openings were created with the goal of promoting forage species for Sitka black-tail deer on the island, in response to

habitat capability declines over the past few decades. Logging practices in the 1950s-70s left much of the island's forests in even-aged management, which has resulted in the current state of dense, young-growth stands in closed canopy or understory stem exclusion condition. Very little light is able to penetrate the canopy to reach the forest floor, resulting in mortality of forage species and inability for reestablishment.

A similar study was conducted in the early 1990s, though preliminary findings were determined inconclusive. The author of that paper acknowledged the relatively short period of response time allowed between gap creation (1985-'87) and monitoring (1991-'92), and that gap sizes were sufficient to promote *Vaccinium spp.* (blueberry) regeneration (Demeo, 1994). In addition to having the benefit of increased response time, we have a refined focus of assessing the ability of canopy gaps to promote key winter forage species, including *Vaccinium spp.*, (blueberry) *Coptis asplenifolia*,

(goldthread) *Cornus Canadensis*, (bunchberry) *Rubus pedatus*, (five-leaved bramble) and *Tiarella trifoliata* (foam flower).

This summer we monitored 19 canopy gaps and adjacent young-growth plots in six areas on Prince of Wales Island, some thinned at the time of gap creation in the late 1980s, other sites un-thinned. Gap sizes ranged from about 40 feet to over 100 feet in diameter. Methods involved estimating percent cover of overstory and understory species, and assessing percent forage and conducting browse counts on *Vaccinium spp.* to determine utilization of the canopy gaps by Sitka black-tail deer. In addition, we took a series of canopy photos with a fisheye lens which, with the aid of light-analyzing software, will allow us to evaluate how much light is reaching the forest floor in both the canopy gap and young-growth sites. A good deal of time was spent this summer solidifying data collection and archival methods, as well as locating sites for next year's field season.



Unthinned young growth stand



Stand that has been thinned for winter forage

Some of our preliminary findings indicate that the most productive gaps for winter forage are on well-drained slopes and are in the range of 50-70 feet in diameter. We found that vegetation response tends to mimic the historical character of the stand. Many canopy gaps on the island were installed in wetter, less productive sites. We've seen that these sites tend to respond with a heavy presence of salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*), skunk cabbage (*Lysichiton americanum*), and lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), species which do not contribute to deer winter forage needs. By categorizing sites based on plant associations we are able to identify which stands we expect to respond best to the small openings. The larger gaps (90 feet and larger in diameter) exhibit a heavier regeneration response by conifers, which shade out regenerating forage species, quickening the progression towards closed-canopy condition. Un-thinned young-growth stands provided the greatest contrast to canopy gaps, as these stands generally had no forage whatsoever.

At the conclusion of our two seasons of monitoring, Dr. Paul Alaback at the University of Montana will compare our data to data collected in the



Canopy gap that emerges after thinning process.

1991-92 monitoring, as well as pre-treatment data collected in 1985, before the gaps were installed, where available, to track the response of the gaps over time. Our goal is to demonstrate that canopy gaps are an effective means of providing winter forage for Sitka black-tail deer, and to be able to identify the ideal site and size of gap for achieving this goal.

Facelift for Thom's Lake Trail

By Keith Appleman, Forestry Technician, Wrangell Ranger District

Half of Thom's Lake Trail was a 14" single-wide boardwalk surfaced trail constructed in the early 1980s on the Forest Service portion of the trail (.7 of a mile) that leads to Thom's Lake. Portions of the boardwalk on this first part of the trail were in need of repair or replacement. The other half of the trail through State of Alaska land was not surfaced, with many muddy and wet areas to hike through, before you arrive at the lake. A local Wrangell resident put forward a proposal to the Wrangell/Petersburg Resource Advisory Committee to improve the trail. The RAC selected and funded the project.

Wrangell Ranger District crews surveyed, designed, prepared and administered the reconstruction contract that began in the spring of 2008. The newly upgraded trail now has a 2-ft-wide rock aggregate surface from the trailhead at the parking area to the lake. The contractor's primary construction material for the project was Alaska Yellow Cedar from a Wrangell sawmill for all the curbing, cross-ties, puncheon, and bridges and aggregate supplied by a local business. This benefited the local economy, as



Resurfaced trail to access the largest lake on Wrangell Island

well. The contractor, Alaska Clearing, Inc., from Hyder did an outstanding job throughout the project. Users now have a well-surfaced trail to access the largest lake on Wrangell Island; whether in pursuit of trout, salmon, deer, or just for a hike through the forest.

New Organisms Found Beneath Dying Thinleaf Alders

By Lori Trummer, Gerard Adams, and Christopher Scott

Since 2004, surveys have been conducted for fungi and other organisms that may be responsible for the widespread dieback and mortality of thinleaf alder (*Alnus incana* subsp. *tenuifolia*) in Southcentral and Interior Alaska. In 2007 and 2008, 80 riparian stands were sampled along a south to north transect from Kenai Peninsula to beyond Fairbanks and east to Tok and Valdez.

One important genus of water molds, *Phytophthora*, was of particular interest in our surveys because *P. alni* is an introduced pathogen causing a lethal root and collar rot of alder species. The potential establishment and spread of this pathogen is perceived as a threat to all species of *Alnus* in the western hemisphere. It had not been confirmed outside of Europe until the Alaska findings in 2007.

In the summers of 2007 and 2008, we baited streams and wet soil beneath dying alders using rhododendron leaves, alder twigs, and bearberry leaves (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*). To our surprise, 10 isolates to date of *P. alni* subsp. *uniformis* (PAU) have been found from seven locations across more than 1,000 road miles. This was the first time that this organism had been confirmed in North America.

To test whether PAU was causing root disease in Alaska, we completely excavated 100 alder root systems in 2008. This revealed that symptoms of root and collar rot were rarely present at PAU locations. The discovery of *P. alni* in remote regions of Alaska without causing root disease does not match the scenario in Europe. We are currently testing whether the PAU subspecies is native to Alaska. Alder mortality and dieback was common in most of the 80 surveyed sites and was often associated with extensive stem cankers caused by at least 12 fungal species. Thus we believe that the dieback and mortality of alder in Southcentral and the Interior is due to above-ground cankers, likely native species, and not due to below-ground root rots, such as PAU.

Equally interesting is the discovery of 14 isolates to date of a new *Phytophthora* species on the Kenai Peninsula previously unknown to science. This new species raised eyebrows because it had a DNA sequence that aligns closest to several other tree pathogens of importance, including *P. lateralis*, a pathogen of Port Orford Cedar; *P. hibernalis*, a citrus pathogen that also can cause cankers on Port Orford Cedar; *P. foliorum*, a new species of unknown virulence and host range; and *P. ramorum*, an oak pathogen causing sudden oak death. It is agreed that the new *Phytophthora* isolate is unique and worth pursuing formal description and naming.

For more information on these new exciting findings in Alaska, please see our website: www.fs.fed.us/r10/spf/fhp and click on the Quick Pick "Alder *P. alni*". You can also contact



Top: Dr. Gerry Adams (R) and FHP Technician Chris Scott (L) dig up one of the 100 alder root systems excavated for evidence of *Phytophthora* root disease in Summer 2008.

Bottom: FHP Technicians Chris Scott and Tiphonie Henningsen process nearly 500 mud bowls baited for *Phytophthora* diseases with *Rhododendron* leaves.

Lori Trummer until April 1, when she retires after 20 years with the Forest Service.

Lori Trummer, Pathologist, State & Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, ltrumner@fs.fed.us

Gerard Adams, Assoc. Professor, Dept. of Plant Pathology, Michigan State University

Christopher Scott, Technician, State & Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service

Misty Fiords Kayak Ranger Interpretive Program

By Lorelei Haukness, Wilderness/Recreation Specialist, Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District



Left: Kayak ranger Jen Kevil has an audience as she boards a cruise ship in Misty Fiords.

Right: Lead Kayak Ranger Leah Taylor shares wilderness values with visitors to Misty Fiords. Photo by Lorelei Haukness.

Located 22 miles east of Ketchikan, Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness is difficult to access. Nevertheless, thousands of people visit the area each summer to view the steep, granite-walled fjords and abundant wildlife. Visitors travel to the Monument primarily via boat or fixed-wing aircraft. In 1988, kayak rangers camping at the mouth of Rudyerd Bay, a popular destination in the core area of Misty Fiords, devised a way to contact these visitors and educate them about the area. They began hailing private boaters via marine radio and boarding their ships to provide informal interpretive tours. These efforts have since evolved into an innovative partnership for providing on-board interpretive programs in Misty Fiords.

In 1990, an agreement with Cruise West formalized the kayak ranger interpretive program. By 1995, the program had grown to include several medium-sized cruise ship companies that provided financial support to cover program costs. Twenty years later, our rangers continue to work with Cruise West to contact over 3,000 visitors annually.

The daily life of a Misty Fiords kayak ranger has changed over the past twenty years. In the early years of the program, rangers stayed at a temporary camp called Sweet Cedars during their 10-day hitches. The rangers now divide their time between dispersed campsites and Misty Barge, which allows them to shower, eat a hot meal, and develop educational programs in their free time.

Despite these luxuries, the rangers encounter daily challenges. They have continued the tradition of kayaking out to meet the cruise ships, which they board in the East Behm Canal. Strong winds and choppy water require clever teamwork between Cruise West's deckhands and the wilderness rangers while boarding and disembarking the ship. Use of the kayaks reinforces the Wilderness Act of 1964's emphasis on primitive recreation and non-mechanized transport.

Once on board, the kayak rangers deliver a 1½-hour interpretive program that focuses on the purpose and value of protecting legally-designated wilderness. They also provide information about the

area's unique geology; natural and cultural history; and terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Following the interpretive program, rangers spend several hours on the vessels, talking informally with visitors about a wide range of topics. This provides an excellent opportunity to help the public understand what the Forest Service does and increase support and appreciation for public lands.

Fewer large and medium-sized cruise ships are entering Misty Fiords these days and ½-day boat excursions from Ketchikan have become popular among visitors off of the large cruise ships. In response to this change, we are hoping to develop new partnerships with Ketchikan-based tour providers in the coming years. This type of tour will present new challenges for the rangers. They can board the vessels in town, so they'll no longer be bobbing up and down in three-foot seas with a hundred faces eagerly peering over the deck railing as they climb aboard. But they will have to learn how to describe the various layers of the intertidal zone while traveling 30 miles per hour in a driving rain.

Accessibility at Twelvemile Cabin

By Victoria Houser, Recreation Planner, Craig Ranger District

After many years of planning, the Twelvemile Cabin and accessible trail project on the Craig Ranger District has been constructed. Although built and open for reservations, it was not completely finished, as the Craig Recreation Crew learned from some of the cabin's visitors. Although the new cabin was designed to be accessible, slight modifications continued to be necessary as the Forest Service learned more about the special needs of visitors to this cabin.

The Twelvemile Cabin and Trail resulted from a mitigation measure between Alaska Power and Telephone and the Forest Service to make up for lost recreation opportunities at Black Bear Lake when the Black Bear hydroelectric facility was developed. The project took many years to complete. It made several conceptual leaps from a trail into alpine, to a cross-island trail to a remote cabin, to an accessible cabin. Ultimately, the site selected for the accessible cabin and trail was just north of the Twelvemile estuary, nestled unobtrusively in the forest and looking out over the grass flats of the inlet.

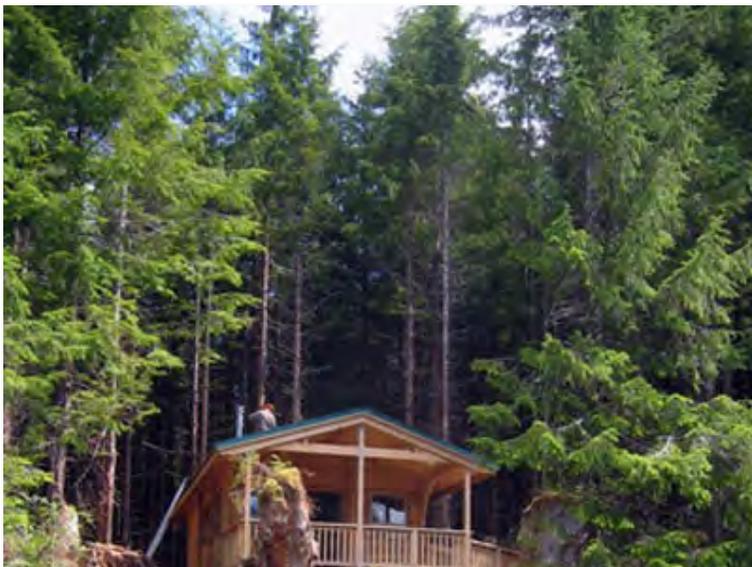
The cabin is spacious. It is just starting to accumulate a collection of canned goods, fire starter, reading material and other bits of interest that visitors have deemed worthy of leaving for fellow visitors. There is something else at this cabin, something different. Hooks are moved lower, rooms and doorways are wider and the opening to the stove is at waist level. This cabin is designed to be accessible



The Twelvemile Trail was constructed with limited sloped and gravel surface to help people who have difficulties walking on uneven surfaces.

for all visitors. The design follows Forest Service standards for the Americans with Disabilities Act, but small changes have been made to the cabin to make it more comfortable and usable for people who may have struggled with the constructed design.

For example, after the cabin was open for reservations, an entry in the log book suggested that one of the running boards be removed because the turning radius was too small from the cabin to the outhouse. In response to this public comment, the cabin to trail transition has been renovated to meet the needs of the users. Ben Walker, the cabin manager for the district, contacted Ketchikan-based Southeast Alaska Independent Living, an organization whose mission is to empower individuals with disabilities by providing and promoting options to live as active, productive and involved citizens in their community of choice. SAIL representatives were appreciative of the changes to the cabin and were looking forward to making another trip to the Twelvemile Cabin in the spring. They also mentioned that the construction of the trail with its limited slope, pullouts and gravel surface were great for individuals with difficulties walking on uneven surfaces. Constructing an outdoor recreation facility and trail that are truly accessible is challenging and often a work in progress, as the Craig Recreation Crew has learned, but it also rewarding when the work is appreciated.



New accessible cabin at Twelvemile Trail. Photo by Angela Coleman.

Sound Monitoring in Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness

By Lorelei Haukness, Wilderness/Recreation Specialist, Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District

In 2008, our inventory and monitoring crew began monitoring sounds associated with fixed-wing aircraft at remote lakes in Misty-Fiords National Monument Wilderness, a popular flightseeing destination for the increasing number of tourists visiting Southeast Alaska each summer.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as an area that “has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.” In addition, the Chief’s 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge includes an element requiring managers to ensure that each wilderness has adequate direction, monitoring, and management actions to protect these opportunities. Events and conditions inside wilderness, as well as those beyond wilderness boundaries and Forest Service jurisdiction, affect visitors’ opportunities for solitude.

In January 2008 our Inventory and Monitoring Crew Leader, Jacob Hofman, attended a two-day workshop in Anchorage that was sponsored by the National Park Service’s Natural Sounds Program. At the workshop, he learned about various sound monitoring methods and equipment, potential standards and indicators related to sound monitoring, and how acoustic metrics can be used during in resource planning.

After hearing about some of the less expensive monitoring options, we decided to give one a test run. Hofman put together a recording system (Table 1) and throughout the field season we recorded a total of 77 days of continuous audio information at five lakes in Misty Fiords. Listening to these recordings allowed us to verify sound sources and focus our analysis on sound events related to fixed-wing aircraft. We then used a free software program called SPLat to graphically represent sound intensity at various frequencies over time. National Park Service staff provided invaluable support and guidance throughout this learning process.

One benefit of this monitoring approach is the ability to gather large amounts of information with minimal investments of money or personnel field time. Recordings can capture soundscape variation throughout the day, week, and season, which is difficult to do with limited observational data. Information about the number, time, duration, and intensity of sound events can be used to develop standards and indicators related to solitude.

Sounds associated with float plane traffic have repeatedly been identified as an issue of concern in Misty Fiords. Although much of the floatplane traffic is beyond Forest Service jurisdiction, information collected will help managers and the public understand current conditions in Misty Fiords and how those conditions are



Float plane over Ketchikan-Misty Fiords National Monument



Recorder

Table 1. Equipment Requirements and Cost	
Item	Cost
Audio Recorder	\$500.00
Omni-directional Microphone	25.00
8 GB Memory Cards (2)	220.00
Plastic Tote	20.00
Pelican Case	25.00
Radio Repeater Batteries	0.0
Adapter Cable	17.00
Memory Card Reader	13.00
Microphone Windscreen	3.00
Microphone Plug Converter	3.00
TOTAL	\$828.00

changing over time. In addition, the Forest Service authorizes outfitter and guides to conduct floatplane landing tours on several lakes throughout Misty Fiords and this information will be used to help evaluate the impacts these landings have on opportunities for solitude throughout the Wilderness.

Trails Training at Nalychevo Nature Park

By Russel Wicka, Supervisory Forest Technician, Tongass National Forest

Russia's Kamchatka peninsula is home to some of the world's most unique natural territories. Due to its remoteness and strategic military importance, Kamchatka remained relatively protected throughout history. The peninsula has only recently opened up to visitors and become more accessible. This fact, together with economic difficulties facing Russia, has created some challenges for biodiversity and protected areas (PAs) on Kamchatka.

It is expected that visitor use of Kamchatka parks will steadily increase over the coming years. For this reason, managers are seeking increased access to information and strategies for conserving these important resources. This presents a unique opportunity for U.S. Forest Service's International Programs. Forest Service employees can share valuable experience to help build this capacity in Kamchatka. For example, proper trail construction and maintenance on Kamchatka will become increasingly important. Trails provide access to significant features in protected areas. If the system of trails in a park is poorly constructed, users will actually be damaging the environment they have traveled to visit and witness. It is up to the Regional Park staff to take responsibility over the system of trails in their parks.

In February 2007, the Forest Service joined the Consortium for International Protected Area Management, the Wild Salmon Center, the United Nations Development Program, and EcoCenter Zapovedniks to develop a training program for PA managers. The goal was to create and support a long-term, sustainable capacity building program on Kamchatka that is based on best practices

and methodologies. Much of the PA infrastructure, including trail networks, is in poor shape. Game trails adopted into these systems and utilized by visitors are not sustainable. Increasing use of improperly located and constructed trails has led to resource damage. Through best management practices, Park staff will be able to decrease resource damage by rehabilitating poorly constructed trails and to provide new trails designed for long term sustainability. Properly constructed trails also increase visitor satisfaction.

In July 2008, I joined Theresa Spang from the Consortium at a training workshop at Nalychevo Nature Park. Theresa talked about trail planning & design, construction practices, water and drainage issues, and monitoring after construction. I presented the practical hands-on training centered on actual lay-out and construction of a trail in Nalychevo Park. There were 13 participants from three parks: Nalychevo, Bystrinsky and Yuzhno-Kachatsky. There was also a member of the Wildlife Protection Service and two volunteers from the Manfred-Hermesen Foundation. The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Provide theoretical training which outlines all aspects of trail construction from planning and design through final trail construction and post construction monitoring.
- Lead a "hands-on" trail construction project, which highlights all aspects of the theoretical training including the demonstration of several trail rehabilitation and restoration techniques and providing a sustainable trail alignment.



Forget-me-nots



Fox in Nalychevo Nature Park



Squirrel

After the classroom presentations, we were led by Park staff to several trails which were becoming entrenched and difficult to hike due to the natural grade of the drainage, which was upwards of 50% in some areas. One old trail went straight down hill; such trails become entrenched when traffic dislocates soil

down steep grades. I determined the only way to prevent further resource damage was to relocate the trail to a different site at a sustainable grade. We decided that the entire walking surface would be on native material, and that no excavated soil would be used for the tread. This is a labor intensive form of construction, and a real challenge for a green crew. Field participants were highly motivated, however, and very productive. The novice crew of volunteers, family members and a few park staff produced a high quality, sustainable trail.

We also rehabilitated some existing trails. This included decompacting an old trail with a pick and shovel and planting vegetative plugs to reestablish ground cover. Plugs were collected from the general location around the old trail. Care was taken not to make the collection locations visible from the new trail alignment, and not to over harvest any given area of its native plant cover. Also, several sections of old trail were re-contoured to prevailing grade, meaning that the entrenched portions were filled in to the original prevailing grade. A single, well-defined sustainable route was constructed to mitigate the impact of the multiple routes through the area that had been developing. Park staff also posted several informational signs requesting the public to utilize the new routes developed and discontinue hiking on the old trails.

There were numerous challenges associated with this project including lack of funds, proper tools, a short season when work can be completed, and difficult access to trail locations. The true measure of success of this training, however, will be shown by the ability of regional park staff in Kamchatka to recognize resource damage associated with certain trails in their Parks and take action to alleviate these problems. Thanks to the training opportunities we provided, participants learned trail restoration and rehabilitation techniques. Multiple sections of poorly constructed trail were rehabilitated, and in time, will once again function as part of the surrounding dynamic environment. Park staff completed high quality work and addressed watershed damage by correctly locating and constructing trails. They demonstrated safe and efficient use of a variety of tools and surveying equipment.

Park Staff from all the PAs proved to be dedicated, friendly and hard working. These Russian professionals are making major advances in best management practices based on International standards. It was a unique opportunity to see such amazing parks and work with our neighbors just across the North Pacific.



Part of the trails training crew at Nalychevo Nature Park.



Transportation at Nalychevo Nature Park: breakdowns happen. The trails crew is sidelined when the truck breaks down.



A squirrel watches as Russel Wicka takes photographs.

The Forest Service trail manual is available on line at:
(<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs/07232806/toc.htm>).

Fungus Fair

By Betty Charnon, Ecologist, Chugach National Forest

What started out as plans for a simple nature walk “mushroomed” into a weekend long event of fun-filled activities. From September 5-7, Girdwood, Alaska, was host to the Fungus Fair! The event was organized by the Chugach National Forest, Glacier Ranger District, and Jonnie Lazarus from Girdwood Parks and Recreation. Key district organizers were mycologist Kate Mohatt and ecologist Betty Charnon, but the entire district staff assisted in many ways, including artwork for totes and T-shirts, trail improvements for the fun run, providing logs for the mushroom workshop, staffing the registration desk, and set-up/clean-up.



Mushroom photo by Sadie Youngstrom.

The weekend began with the Fungus Fair “Formal” at the Hotel Alyeska. This fundraising event featured a five-course gourmet fungal feast with wine pairings followed by a live auction of items donated by local artists and businesses. The rest of the weekend centered on activities aimed at expanding local knowledge of fungi in the Girdwood area through a series of talks by local experts, guided mushroom forays, mushroom cultivation workshops, and an incredible display of local mushrooms in the new Girdwood Community Center. There was something for everyone at Fungus Fair with other activities such as the Fun-Guy/Fun-Gal Fun Run, a Mushroom Movie night featuring “Attack of the

Mushroom People,” and a wildly popular kids arts and crafts workshop. All proceeds from this event went towards future Fungus Fairs and Girdwood Community projects. This year’s beneficiary is the Girdwood Skate Park, which is in desperate need of renovation. Final fund-raising figures showed we raised nearly \$10,000.

Although the Forest Service and Girdwood Parks and Recreation were the main partners, other organizations and individuals shared their particular areas of expertise to make this a true community event. Here is a quick rundown of community involvement. The local non-profit group Girdwood Inc. was the fiscal sponsor so we could raise money without having to rely on the Forest Service budget and also incorporate a worthy fund-raiser for a community project. The Hotel Alyeska chef Michael Flynn created an incredible menu for the “Formal” and owner John Byrne III gave a generous donation toward the dinner. Fungal experts from Kenai, Anchorage, and Cordova conducted the forays and gave popular talks on the many uses and roles of fungi. Four Valleys Community School, Inc., helped out in many ways from co-sponsoring the fun run to allowing the use of their credit card machine at the auction. Local runners and the junior high cross country team helped organize the fun run. Artists Katie and Sarah Cronk organized the kid’s activities. They also made the fabulous fairy faces and other large artwork that can be used in future events. Local barista Carol Sanner (Glacier Valley Roasters) kept us supplied with her great coffee throughout the weekend. Girdwood Books and News owner Chuck Hinson got a special order of mushroom books to sell at Fungus Fair. Dozens of community members staffed the T-shirts and



Sarah Cronk and Katie Cronk’s mushroom art. Photo by Jonnie Lazarus.

registration desk. The librarian read mushroom stories to kids during lap-sit time. The junior high student council supplied the popcorn snacks during the movie. Dozens of artists and local businesses donated items for the auction. Finally, there were hundreds of people who participated in the various events throughout the weekend.

Due to the success of Fungus Fair this year, plans are already underway for next year. Through Fungus Fair, we can educate the public on mushroom identification, proper collecting techniques, uses, and other interesting facts about fungi. The Cordova District also recognized this need and successfully conducted their second annual Fungus Festival. We are fortunate to be able to follow their example and will continue to work together to make both events a smashing success. By hosting these events, the Forest Service is recognized not only as a valuable source of ecological information for fungi enthusiasts but also as an important part of the community.

A Vision of Beauty and Craftsmanship

By Sandy Russell, Sitka Ranger District, Starrigavan Recreation Area Manager

Starrigavan Creek Cabin started as a dream and evolved into a “vision of beauty and craftsmanship.” While visiting the cabin site along the banks of Starrigavan Creek amid a coastal hemlock-spruce forest, one may quickly be reminded of Laura Ingalls Wilder’s book, “On the Banks of Plum Creek.”

The recreation cabin has unique features: its physical look; its name (Russian “Starrigavan” meaning “old harbor”); it is the first young growth cabin on the Tongass; it is the only Tongass cabin you can drive up to; and, it is the only cabin located within an existing developed recreation area.

The dream of replacing an existing creek side campsite with a cabin took root shortly after reconstruction of Starrigavan Creek in 2003. As manager of the area, I realized that a whole segment of the public was unable to experience the 150 remote cabins of the Tongass. However, a cabin on the road system within Starrigavan would benefit many, including: those with mobility and ADA accessible needs; the elderly; families with small children; and persons without equipment or finances to boat or fly to a remote Forest Service cabin. The idea was a hard sell to some, and a creative approach was necessary.

In 2007, the Sitka Ranger District began looking for “big picture” opportunities for recreation, watershed, fisheries, wildlife, and bota-



*Starrigavan Creek Cabin: the product of dreams and hard work.
Photo by Sandy Russell*

ny for the Starrigavan watershed, which encompasses 4,100 acres seven miles north of downtown Sitka. The result was the development of the Starrigavan Integrated Resource Plan, which included the management of young growth timber. In Fall 2007, areas of Starrigavan watershed were thinned to improve wildlife, riparian, and fish habitat along the creek, with the idea of using the removed trees and slash for enhancements and by-products. This work hastened the dream of a cabin toward reality.

About 77 young growth spruce trees were removed. The trees were 35-40 years in age and 12-14” in diameter. They were transported to and stored over the winter at the University of Alaska Southeast, Sitka Campus.

In spring, a “peeling party” was organized, and employees used pressure washers to remove the bark. This process gave the logs an unusual mottled look of light and dark wood. In May 2008, during a two-week log cabin building class at the

university, 12 students crafted a miracle within a former World War II aircraft hangar. The class hand-scribed, cut, and fit 44 logs, which included 40 wall logs and 4 cross-beams for a cabin loft. An additional log post was fitted for a loft stairway and two 8” x 8” gable trusses were built. The resulting cabin shell (roughly 16’ x 20’) was 10 rounds high, where four interlocked logs made a round. Ten rounds measured ap-

proximately 10 feet high.

Before the logs were reassembled at the Starrigavan site, a chain saw was used to etch single grooves in the top length of each log. The grooves were filled with sheep wool for insulation and the corners were interlocked. Sheep wool is a natural fiber and has water repellent properties. As a log settles, the groove will keep the log from splitting and will produce a tighter fit with the log below. Tools for constructing the shell included: a scribe, draw-knife, chain saws, sanders, tapes, levels, pencils, a peavey hook, and axes. Wooden dowels were strategically driven into the logs to hold the cabin shell intact. A rough terrain crane with an extended boom and forklift capability was used to lift and move the logs. Instructors were Mike and Richard Musick of Ester Construction in Ester, Alaska.

Demonstrating pride in their creation, several students stayed on a few extra days to reassemble the log shell on a concrete foundation at Campsite 6 within Starrigavan

Recreation Area. From that point, the cabin was completed by many hands, including the district's cabin crew, Starrigavan Hosts, district employees and a contractor.

Young growth tongue and groove lumber was used to complete much of the under layment for the roof, the loft ceiling and floor, and the main cabin floor. The contractor added a staircase, wood stove, countertops and shelves, a lower bunk on the main floor, table and benches, and other interior furnishings. We hope to eventually use fire logs made of recycled compressed cardboard for the fuel in the wood stove.

The completion of the cabin in 2008 was the result of the Starrigavan Integrated Resource Plan, community partnerships, employee teamwork, and tender-loving craftsmanship by both the students and the contractor.

While visitors will be able to drive up to the cabin seven months of the year, they can engage in their "pioneer spirit" and hike the one-quarter mile snow-covered road in the winter. Then, when they arrive, they can watch snowflakes peacefully fall from within a "little cabin with a lot of character."

Starrigavan Creek awaits your visit! For more details and reservation information, visit www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass and www.recreation.gov, or contact the Sitka Ranger District via phone (907) 747-6671 or e-mail r10_sitka_rd@fs.fed.us.



Kim Perkins uses a chainsaw to create notches in the logs.

Better Navigation at Pack Creek

By Harry Tullis, Lead Wilderness Ranger, Admiralty National Monument

At the heart of Admiralty Island in the Kootznoowoo Wilderness, the Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area is enjoyed by many visitors each summer. The trail to its viewing tower is often complimented as being one of the most beautiful trails ever hiked; the setting



Harry Tullis checks out a difficult "staircase" on the Pack Creek Trail.

is spectacular and has regular visitors of the furry kind. Despite the trail being in a Wilderness it's one of the most popular trails on the forest averaging over a thousand visitors a summer. Unfortunately, several sections of the trail are through a steep scree slope that requires visitors to navigate a series of boulders that require agility and focus on each step. This was interfering with visitor's ability to watch for bears.

During Summer 2008, the Pack Creek staff used grant funds from outfitter guide fees to rebuild the troubling section. Work was supposed to begin in May prior to the viewing season but late spring snow remained on the trail. During the second week of June when the trail finally cleared of snow and visitors were already arriving, Don MacDougall and Harry Tullis worked tirelessly with rock bars and a variety of primitive hand tools to manipulate boulders into a series of steps and solid walking surfaces. The trail is now suitable for



The reworked staircase makes the Pack Creek Trail safer and more enjoyable. Photos by Don MacDougall.

all age groups and abilities and visitors can hike with confidence without worrying whether their next step will result in a fall. Full enjoyment of the rainforest and nature can now be realized by all, and eyes can remain appropriately fixed ahead in anticipation of the furry creatures.

A Tribute to Sigurd T. Olson

By John Sandor

Sigurd T. Olson, long-time resident of Douglas, Alaska, and renowned Alaskan wildlife biologist passed away at the Juneau Pioneers Home, December 21, 2008, at the age of 85.

Sig was born in Ely, Minn., September 15, 1923, the eldest son of internationally famous conservationist Sigurd F. Olson and wife Elizabeth Dorothy Olson. Sig's father (1899-1982) was one of the first advocates of establishing the Boundary Waters Canoe Area on the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota, and the author of many books and articles on conservation practices, wilderness and the BWCA.

Sig followed in his father's footsteps, and during his graduate studies as a wildlife biologist, authored a thesis on his studies of the Loon, which remains an important research publications of that species.

Sig was a combat veteran of WWII. He served in the U.S. Army Mountain Ski Division. He was serving in Italy at the time of the liberation of Italy from the dictatorship of Benito Mussolini, who was captured and hanged by Italian civilians fairly near where Sig was in service.

Sig's wife, Esther was also born in Ely, Minn. Sig and Esther were married in Austin, Texas in 1944. After WWII and graduation from college, Sig and Esther moved to Alaska, settling in Douglas in 1959. Sig later worked in Anchorage for six years before returning to Douglas in 1978. Sig and Esther had two sons—Greg and

Robert—and several grandchildren.

After Sig came to Alaska he first worked as a biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and later with the U. S. Forest Service. Sig not only served as Director of Wildlife and Sport Fisheries programs with the Forest Service but also served on the state-wide team evaluating all of Alaska's lands for Alaska National Interest land designations by the Congress and President.

After retiring from the Forest Service, Sig remained active with various wildlife-fisheries professional organizations. He and Esther were also able to devote more time to hiking, skiing, canoeing, gardening and in various programs in the Douglas Methodist Church. Sig remained an active leader in the development and operation of the Eaglecrest Ski area until he moved from his home to the Pioneer Home earlier this year.

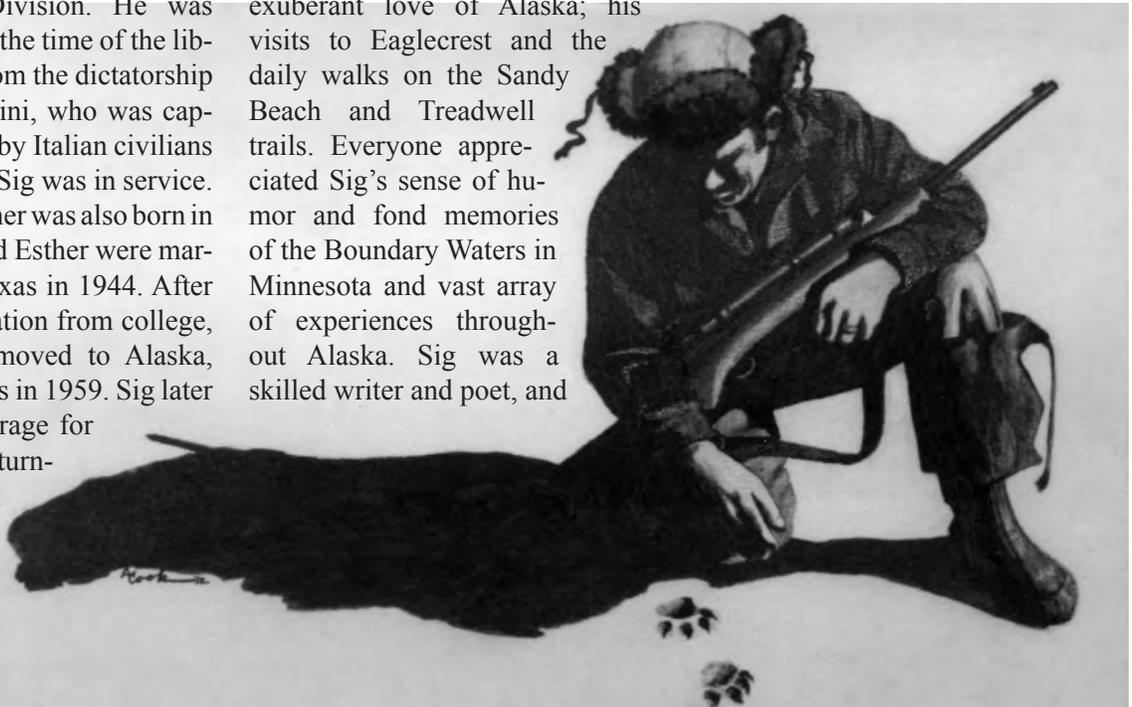
Sig's many friends throughout the community always enjoyed his exuberant love of Alaska; his visits to Eaglecrest and the daily walks on the Sandy Beach and Treadwell trails. Everyone appreciated Sig's sense of humor and fond memories of the Boundary Waters in Minnesota and vast array of experiences throughout Alaska. Sig was a skilled writer and poet, and

enjoyed recalling rhymes he learned as a youth. "Be the labor, great or small—do it well or not at all!" was an admonition he shared within various organizations in which he served.

Sigurd T. Olson's outstanding lifetime of service to his country during WWII; his eminent career as a wildlife biologist; and Sig's personal life as an Alaskan husband, father, sportsman, skier and faithful member of the Douglas Community and Methodist Church will forever be remembered by his family, co-workers and friends.

(John Sandor is an active retiree and former Alaska Regional Forester.)

Drawing by Alice Cook in 1972 from a photo by Hatch Graham taken of Sig Olson examining a wolf track at the south end of Lake Tazimina, Lake Clark Area. The original drawing is displayed in the Regional Forester's office.



Tongass Rainforest Festival

By Karen Dillman, Ecologist, and Mary Clemens, Tongass National Forest

From fiddleheads to fungi, the first annual Tongass Rainforest Festival in Petersburg September 4-7 provided a venue for all ages to explore their interests in the different biota of the Alaskan rainforest. Events were attended by people of all ages from this busy fishing community with over a dozen guided nature walks, lectures, crafts and workshops to choose from.

The festival was organized and co-sponsored by the Forest Service, Petersburg Indian Association, Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program, Alaska Cooperative Extension Service, Alaska State Council on the Arts, RuralCap, and many dedicated individuals and businesses of the community. Local artist Annabelle Baker created the 2008 logo, a painting of a skunk cabbage flower. This beautiful work was transferred onto

cloth bags that were sold to help fund the festival.

Inspired by the uniqueness of the Alaskan rainforest, organizers planned the beginning of the festival with a series of short lectures from regional and international experts in the fields of forest pathology, fern ecology, and traditional plant use. Paul Hennon, forest pathologist from the Forestry Sciences Laboratory in Juneau, presented a talk on the importance of wood decaying fungi in the rainforest and how these fungi kill trees, but at the same time create wildlife habitat, build soil, and alter the carbon cycle. Alaska Regional Botanist Mary Stensvold shared her knowledge of

the life cycle of ferns and fern allies (clubmosses and horsetails) that thrive in the rainforest across many habitats. Canadian botanist Nancy Turner, of the University of Victoria, presented a talk titled "The Culture of Forests: Indigenous Knowledge, Use and Stewardship of North Coast Rainforests". Nancy works in British Columbia with the Haida and other First Nations. Throughout the weekend, she enthusiastically shared the knowledge acquired from decades of experience with native plants, native cultures and forest stewardship.



Mushroom dye expert Dorothy Beebee delights in the find a large bolete, both an excellent edible and dye mushroom from the Tongass.



Melanie Chase proudly displays the fairy garden she created at the Tongass Rainforest Festival.

The "Taste of the Rainforest" potluck and Wildberry Cook-off contest was held at the Petersburg ANB Hall on Friday evening. Irish and folk music performed by local musicians called "The Fiddleheads" accompanied the diners as they enjoyed an outstanding display of tasty delights including goose enchiladas, marinated gumboots, steamed fiddleheads, and wild Alaska salmon. Homemade nagoon berry jam competed hard with the other local berries and took 1st place in the jams and jellies category. Along with other categories and prizes awarded, the People's Choice went to *Huckolates*, a memorable dessert of little baked balls of wild huckleberries and chocolate.

Sonja Koukel of the Cooperative Extension Service in Juneau provided pressure gauge testing and

conducted a workshop on how to properly preserve a harvest. Another workshop was offered to local fiber enthusiasts in the process of dying natural fibers with fungi. Artist Dorothy Beebee, co-founder of the Mushroom Dye Institute shared her knowledge and love of fungi for color. The group experimented with some locally gathered fungi, acquiring colors ranging from glacial ice

blue to bright orange and golds. For more information on mushroom dyes and what the Petersburg dyers experimented with can be found at <http://www.mushroomsforcolor.com/>

Themed nature hikes were also popular events lead by local and regional experts and enthusiasts focusing on birds, fungi, lichens, ferns, muskeg plants and traditional plant uses. For children, there were

two special nature hikes as well as activities, including a “make a fairy house” craft time. Dozens of kids used their imagination to create their own fairy houses with locally collected natural materials from the forest and beaches.

Local organizers had so much fun with the Tongass Rainforest Festival that they are already planning for next year!

Swan Observatory

By Carin Christensen, Petersburg Ranger

It is hard to miss the sight of the Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), gliding across the water to rest on Blind Slough, south of Petersburg. The largest of the swans, it stands over four feet tall with an amazing seven foot wingspan. Once on the brink of extinction in the 1920s, full protection has allowed today’s numbers to soar over 24,000 in the world, with Alaska home to about 75% of that population.

Blind Slough is one of the northern-most wintering areas for Trumpeter Swans, with peak migration numbers reaching over 150 and over-wintering numbers at about 75. The swans can generally be seen from mid-October until April. The Slough is an intertidal area that remains ice-free and provides an excellent place to forage for food. With strong ties to their nesting and wintering areas, the swans will return to these homes (and often the same nest) year after year.

Now visitors to this area can view the impressive bird from an equally impressive building. In the fall of 2008, the Swan Observatory, located 16 miles south of Petersburg along Mitkof Highway, was rebuilt, replacing the former building constructed in 1985. A local company was contracted by the Forest Service to complete the complex structure, and the majority of the cedar used in the construction was milled in Southeast Alaska. The new design meets accessibility standards and is connected to the highway by an accessible raised boardwalk. The inside of the building feels spacious and offers a bench, new interpretive panels, shutters on the windows, and the best feature of all, two skylights. Even on the darkest day, you could swear that somebody left the lights on.

The interpretive display inside the building highlights the Trumpeter Swan, as well as other bird species found in the area. In surveys completed in 1990, over 100 different species of birds were identified at Blind Slough. Because these birds can be sensitive to human disturbance, it is important that they are viewed from a discreet location. The Swan Observatory provides just that, and more.



Top: Exterior view of swan observatory on Blind Slough south of Petersburg. Bottom: Interpretive panels.
Photos by Carin Christensen.

Entomologist Returns from Active Duty in Iraq

By Trish Wurtz, Ph.D. Ecologist, State & Private Forestry

Forest Health Protection entomologist Jim Kruse returned September 2008 from a year's active duty in Iraq. Jim is a Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserves. He was recalled to active duty October 5, 2007 and reported for duty in Baghdad in November. Jim now has 5 years of active duty within his 21 years total years of military service. He has spent 12 years as an officer.

Jim was part of a group of Navy personnel sent to work for the Army as part of the "troop surge." He was a part of Multi-National Forces-Iraq, Combined Intelligence Operations Center (CIOC). He held a variety of different positions in the year he was gone, including Team Leader of the Governance Team, CIOC Executive Officer, and member of the Iraqi Security Forces Transition Team.

Over the course of the year, Jim worked in two different Iraqi palaces while living in a trailer. Being used to Alaska's climate, Jim found the temperatures in Iraq a challenge. In the fall, spring, and summer, the temperature routinely exceeded 105°F, and on a few days it pushed 120°F. Air conditioning varied but generally he was happy to have indoor temperatures in the 80s. The summer was plagued by dust-storms and a severe drought. In December, Baghdad actually received a little dusting of snow, the first in a hundred years.

One of the memorable aspects of Jim's deployment was the diversity of nationalities that he interacted with daily. While the multinational forces are comprised of some 30 countries involved in combat operations or support, there were people from a dozen or more additional countries providing logistical services. For example, guard services for the various compounds were provided by Tongans, El Salvadorans, and Ugandans, while Filipinos, Sri Lankans, Turks and Pakistanis provided food services, laundry services, and equipment repair. On a daily basis, Jim worked with British, Australian, Latvian, Ukrainian and Albanian soldiers. "When I was on the Iraqi Security Forces Transition Team, I worked with Iraqi officers," said Jim.

Jim got to meet General David H. Petraeus near the end of his deployment, when Jim was awarded the Defense Meritorious Service Medal. This medal is one award below a bronze star and is a high-ranking non-combat distinction.



General David H. Petraeus shakes hands with Jim Kruse at the end of his tour.

Back in Fairbanks, Jim returns to his position as the Interior Alaska entomologist for Forest Health Protection. His job involves monitoring insect outbreaks, providing technical assistance to foresters and landowners, and coordinating with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to survey for and detect invasive insects. During Jim's absence, Chuck Frank of the Ottawa National Forest detailed in behind him.

"The hardest part of being gone was missing my wife and kids," said Jim. "I didn't have that when I was in the Gulf War. Back then, it was just me." Jim and his wife Kathy have two young sons, Ben and Sam. "Kathy not only ran the household, cared for the kids, was the president of the Woodriver Elementary School PTA, and worked almost full-time, but she oversaw the construction of a 16-unit apartment building while I was gone." Kathy said, "I just tried to stay busy."



Forest Health Protection Entomologists John Lundquist and Jim Kruse examining birch leaf miner larvae.

Sitka Goes a Deeper Shade of Green

as the Forest Service moves to lighten environmental footprint

By Julie Speegle, Tongass Asst. Public Affairs Officer

How green can we go? That's just one of the underlying questions of the 2008 Forest Service Sustainable Operations Summit, held Nov. 18-20 in Madison, Wisc. Employees at 26 host sites across the country participated in the first all-remote video/web-based conference, including about ten at the Sitka Ranger District.

The focus for the summit was Walking the Talk for Sustainability: Reducing our Environmental Footprint. Project leaders from across the country made presentations on green-themed topics such as alternative transportation and using shuttles for visitors, bio-based products, bio-fuels, renewable energy, reducing energy consumption, recycling, reducing waste in federal facilities, watershed protection and water conservation, eco-designs for building,

climate change policy and buying green products.

"This summit is an opportunity to see what others are doing around the country to reduce the Forest Service's impact on the environment," said Jacqueline Foss, Sitka soil scientist and host-site conference organizer. "It gets you thinking about where we can improve and how to engage employees in the effort."

Sitka employees with the ranger district and the supervisor's office have recent experience in ramping up recycling efforts. The district and SO consolidated office space from three to two floors in October. During the move, employees took extra care to ensure paper, cardboard, plastics and other recyclable items went to the recycle center rather than to the landfill.

The Sitka recycling program includes sending junk electronics

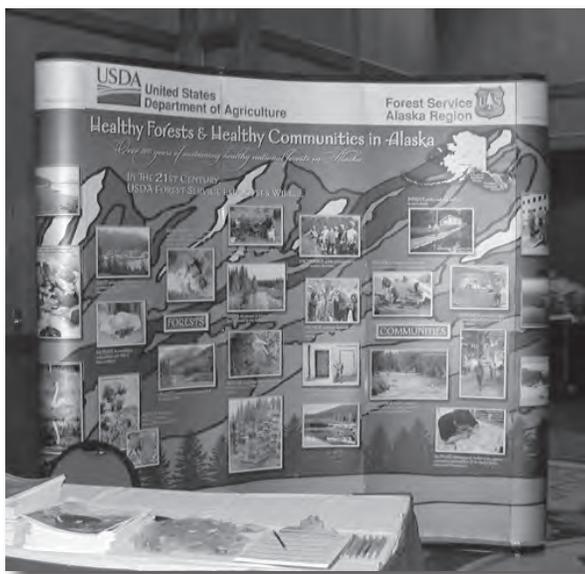
such as computers and peripherals to a high-tech recycling company in Seattle.

Sitka employees also have a personal commitment to sustainability. Michelle Putz, a writer/editor, has converted her car to an all-electric vehicle. Putz says it would be practical for each ranger district to have a small electric car, especially in Southeast Alaska where there isn't far to drive.

And there are smaller measures employees can take in their personal lives to lighten up their own environmental footprint. Foss suggests waste-avoidance actions such as asking that your name be taken off catalogue mailing lists, and re-using items instead of buying them new.

The Sustainable Operations Summit is held every year. Next year Region 6 will host the conference.

Where Do We Go From Here? 2009 Forest Service Reunion



Alaska Region display at the 2006 FS Reunion

Committee members are working feverishly to plan the 2009 Forest Service Reunion's celebration Sept. 7-11, 2009 in Missoula, Mont.

Located in the beautiful Northern Rocky Region, the celebration features educational and entertaining tours designed for fun and relaxation. Throughout the week, program activities include educational speakers, tours, banquets, breakout sessions, an awards presentation and meetings with the Forest Service Leadership Team.

The six-day celebration includes a tour of Grant Kohrs Historic Ranch and the Old State Prison, a classic car show, live music, a silent auction, exhibitor tables, a rafting trip down the Clark Fork River and dining leisurely aboard a riverboat cruise on Flathead Lake.

The Forest Service Reunion brings together folks from all walks of life and many professions. The celebration is open to all current and former employees and their guests.

Visit: <http://www.2009forestservicereunion.net>.

Tongass National Visitor Use Surveys

By Faith Duncan, Interpretive & Conservation Education, Tongass National Forest



Timothy Fisher, Director of Southeast Alaska Discovery Center, conducts National Visitor Use Monitoring surveys at Ward Lake in December 2008.

Beginning in October 2008 through September 2009, Forest Service employees will be conducting visitor use surveys in developed and dispersed recreation sites on the Craig/Thorne Bay and the Ketchikan/Misty Ranger Districts on the Tongass National Forest. There will be 180 days of surveys conducted among the various districts this fall, winter, spring, and summer.

The surveys occur every five years to help forest managers to better manage recreational uses and improve visitor satisfaction. The surveys gather information on how many people use facilities or areas; how often people use the forests for recreation; what types of recreational activities people enjoy; and visitors' overall satisfaction. Some other aspects of the survey work will cover local economic information. All this information is compiled to help managers make better decision for planning at the local, state and even at the Congressional levels. The more national forest managers know about forest visitors, especially their satisfaction and desires, the better they can provide for visitor needs.

The surveys will gather basic

visitor information with all responses being confidential. The interviews only take about 10 minutes and are done voluntarily. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will help with local decisions about recreational planning. Even if you have participated in an interview before, the forest would like to talk to you about each of your national forest visits. The surveys will be conducted randomly throughout the year on forest trails, roads, boat ramps, and campgrounds.

Forest Service employees will be placed at heavily-visited use areas as well as remote sites donning bright orange vests and signs stating "Survey Site, Please Stop" identifying the random survey site for the day. These employees are waiting to talk to you, so please take a few minutes of your trip in the National Forest to discuss your experience.

For more information about the National Visitor Use Monitoring program visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/nvum>.

Employees Spread Holiday Cheer

Regional office employees gathered armloads of toys, clothes, shoes, and food this past holiday season to contribute to the Wooheen committee's annual drive to help needy families in Juneau.

On the left, committee member Wini Kessler delivers a collection of gifts to a representative of the Aware Shelter. On the right, Jeff Miller gives a thumbs up to an appreciative worker at the Salvation Army. Sponsoring families in need has become an annual tradition in the regional office. Photos by Ray Massey.



Alaska's Regional Foresters: Part III

Charles H. Flory, 1919-1937

By Marie Kanan, Procurement Technician, Regional Office

Charles H. Flory graduated from Yale University. He came to Alaska in 1919 as superintendent of Alaska's forests. During the winter of 1920-21, Flory made an inspection trip to Old Kasaan and other abandoned village sites. He saw that Old Kasaan, along with Tongass and Howkan villages, had "the most extensive groups of totem poles remaining," but all groups were in a state of utter neglect. The ravages of time and vandalism had completely ruined Old Kasaan. Flory noted and recommended that remaining Indian effects of value be gathered together and a small native village be reconstructed. That place, in his opinion, was "the National Monument at Sitka."

During Flory's tenure, the national forests in Alaska were underfinanced and understaffed. Forest researchers in the Territory of Alaska labored through the 1920s and 1980s and World War II with limited human and fiscal resources, despite the rising status of research within the Forest Service. Forester Charles

Flory allowed his assistant district forester for timber management, B.F. (Frank) Heintzleman, to use timber management funds to initiate a research program tailored to suit the needs of his office during the early 1920s.

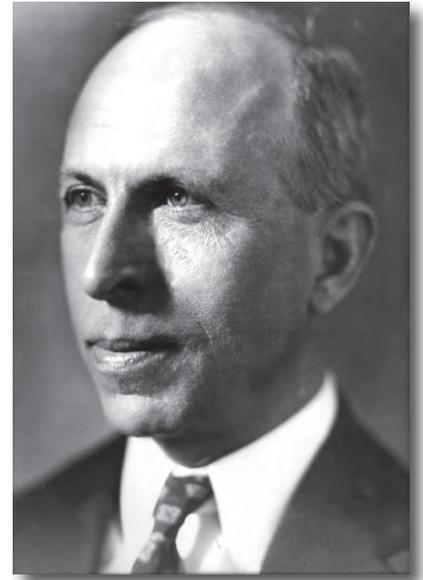
Allocation of forest resources in Alaska in the postwar era was complicated by Native claims on the Tongass National Forest and the role of the Forest Service as a manager of public lands in previous decades. Areas, such as Old Kasaan, occupied by Natives before creation of the Tongass National Forest and then abandoned, could be reopened for entry at a later date. In areas

where the Forest Service had allowed development for other purposes, this allowance often led to conflicts between Native and non-Native claimants.

Flory was the Forest Service representative to the Inter-departmental Alaska Committee, a partnership of federal agencies who worked in the field. Although the committee was abolished in 1922, it was a useful tool that Flory used to settle some boundary matters with the General Land Office.

Flory had many sideline activities, such as rock collecting and founding the Juneau Garden Club. In 1930, he was an ex-officio commissioner for the Dept. of Agriculture for Alaska, as well as regional forester. This job constituted almost half his work load, and may have contributed to his reputation as a weak administrator.

During Flory's tenure, the Alaska Game Commission was set up by an Act of Congress in 1925, and helped to coordinate the work of the Forest Service and the Fish & Wildlife Service in regard to fish and game management.



Administration of Alaska's Forests; Science 28 January 1921:Vol. 53. no. 1361, p. 86-87 DOI: 10.1126/Science.53.1361.86-a
A History of the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska, Lawrence Rakestraw
The Short, Sad History of Old Kasaan National Monument; Frank Norris October 7, 2000



A "Cookie" for the Chief

Regional Forester Denny Bschor presents Chief Gail Kimbell with a commemorative slice of a young-growth log used for a new cabin at the Starrigavan Recreation Area on the Sitka Ranger District.

See page 19 for Sandy Russell's story on how building an accessible cabin on the Tongass National Forest went from being a dream to a reality.

Outstanding Community Partner

By Eleanor Oman, Civil Engineer, Tongass National Forest

The Tongass Alaska Girl Scout Council presented the Outstanding Community Partner award to the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center at its Annual Meeting in Ketchikan November 8, 2008. Tim Fisher accepted the award on behalf of the Discovery Center, his staff, Leslie Swada and Pat Schmidt, and the Ketchikan Misty Ranger District and Tongass SO. Tim, Leslie, and Pat, along with District and SO employees, enthusiastically provided their time and facility to support Girl Scout activities in Ketchikan during the 2007/2008 school year. This work has been featured in a previous edition of *Sourdough Notes*. Their efforts included Pat and Leslie helping Brownie troop 59 earn patches and Tim graciously agreeing to host Girl Scout events at the Discovery Center, including Thinking Day 2008.



Sarah Amspacher teaches kayaking skills.



Top: Girls learn kayak basics.



Left: Troop 59 at Ward Lake Shelter

The following text was taken from the award letter: *Sometimes we wonder about the impact our work and efforts have on the future. Thinking Day 2008 changed the course of history at Tongass Alaska Girl Scout Council. Let me again say that your work and the work of the USDA Forest Service was life changing in the lives of girls and the way in which Girl Scouts work in their communities.*

There is a huge value to Girl Scouts to use our community partners which had long been unused. The USDA Forest Service and the Discovery Center were much more than under utilized community resources. It took Thinking Day 2008 to show Girl Scouts – troop leaders, volunteers, and staff, to really get us to work together as well as impact and support the Girl Scout mission to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

Thanks again from all of us at Tongass Alaska Girl Scout Council for all of your work last year with the Girl Scouts in Southeast Alaska. Congratulations for being our Outstanding Community partner in 2008”.

Girl Scouts in Ketchikan are looking forward to continuing our partnership with the Forest Service and the Discovery Center. Thinking Day 2009 is planned for Feb. 28. This time we will work on the new Alaska’s National Wildlife Refuges Patch and the Eco-Action patch and badges.

Awards for Excellence

By Sandy Skrien, Karen Kromrey and Kristi Kantola

Sometimes people get the idea that all the high quality interpretation and education in the Alaska Region occurs at our major visitor centers. After all, they have the staff resources for mentoring and the financial resources for more programs, equipment, facilities, and training. However, big visitor centers don't have a corner on the market when it comes to talented and committed employees. We are fortunate in Alaska to have those folks spread across the Region in programs large and small. And this year we are honoring two of them for their exemplary work.

Denise Wolvin of the Wrangell Ranger District was selected as the recipient of the D. Robert Hakala Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education award and was the Alaska Region nominee for the national Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education award. As a permanent part time employee, Denise leads the interpretive and conservation education program at Wrangell Ranger District. She has been involved in a number of programs and projects, from the support level to the initiator/leader level.

In 2007 and 2008, Denise worked with the Department of Transportation on a mitigation project that will result in a series of 13 signs on a self guided hike on a local trail, a large display at the Wrangell airport terminal and a revision of a wetlands brochure. These products are for the protection of wetlands. Denise took the lead on a number of other District interpretive and education projects including Jr. Ranger and Forest Explorer programs, the Forest Service partnership with the City of Wrangell to operate the Wrangell

Visitor Center, and more.

In another big project, Denise worked with the district soil scientist, the forest ecologist and the fish and wildlife staff officer to develop and execute Celebrating Wildflowers program at Wrangell. This series of programs involved school presentations, a float in the 4th of July parade and a proposed wildflower garden on district property surrounding the office building during 2007. In 2008, Denise worked with partner KTOO public television in Juneau, Alaska, and a local day care provider to plan and execute an evening program for families all about Celebrating Wildflowers. She and her staff, as well as other Forest Service employees, provided several stations during the event that included making paper flowers, playing wildflower bingo, painting flower pots, and painting flowers.

Among the other significant projects Denise worked on were Girl Scouts invasive species education programs, development of a seasonal interpreter handbook, initiating a series of Campfire Programs several weeks each summer for the last three years, and more.

Denise received a \$500 cash award and up to \$1,500 to travel to the National Association for Interpretation workshop in Portland, Ore., in November.

Carolyn Seramur, Visitor Information Assistant on the Seward Ranger District, was named Alaska Region Interpreter/Conservation Educator of the Year. Carolyn's main program emphasis last summer was the Vantastic program, a



Denise Wolvin

D. Robert Hakala Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Award



Carolyn Seramur

Alaska Region Interpreter/Conservation Educator of the Year

mobile interpretive program staged along the Seward and Sterling Highways. The program was offered from a decorated van with banners that was parked at the Tern Lake wayside. The creative ways Carolyn set up the display and her sunny attitude encouraged visitors to come over and find out more about the resources they are surrounded by in the Chugach National Forest. Carolyn had a number of different reference materials at her fingertips to look up types of plants, berries, animals and birds to help answer visitors' questions. Her positive attitude with all ages of visitors made them feel very welcome to ask any variety of questions and enhanced their learning experience.

birds to help answer visitors' questions. Her positive attitude with all ages of visitors made them feel very welcome to ask any variety of questions and enhanced their learning experience.

Carolyn also jumped right in and assisted with a number of special events during the summer, including Environmental Awareness Days, Kids Fishing Days, the first Chugach Discovery Days at Begich

Boggs Visitor Center and at Tern Lake this August. Late in the summer, several employees needed to resign early from their interpretive positions at Begich Boggs Visitor Center. Carolyn brought this to her supervisor's attention and offered to assist by working several days a week at BBVC and spend weekends with the Vantastic program which was winding down. Her initiative to find ways to make this situation

possible and lend assistance is a key asset and was much appreciated.

Carolyn received a certificate signed by Regional Forester Denny Bschor and Charles Money, Executive Director of the Alaska Geographic Association. The Alaska Geographic Association also gave her a check for \$150.

Congratulations to both of these fine employees and to others who were nominated for these awards.

Tongass Green Team Pumps Up Recycling Program

By Michele Parker, Environmental Engineer, Tongass National Forest

From Yakutat to Ketchikan, Tongass National Forest employees in 11 locations have boosted their recycling efforts, thanks to support from the Forest's Green Team and Environmental Engineering Program.

"We've emphasized recycling for many years," said Tongass Environmental Engineer Michele Parker, "but we've really worked hard to beef up our recycling program since an executive order emphasizing the environment was signed in January 2007."

Executive Order 13423, "Strengthening Federal Environmental, Energy and Transportation Management," states that federal agencies will conduct their environmental, transportation, and energy-related activities in an environmentally responsible manner, and in a continuously improving and sustainable progression.

All Forest units participate in recycling paper, aluminum cans, batteries, ink toners and fluorescent lamps. In addition, each Tongass unit participates in a recycling program tailored to the recycling opportunities available in their respective communities.

Recycled materials include:

- White & Colored Paper
- Aluminum Cans
- Glass
- Plastic
- Tin
- Cardboard
- Ink Toner Cartridges
- Batteries
- Fluorescent Lamps

In Ketchikan offices alone, the Forest Service has recycled nearly 36,000 pounds. At the trash rate of \$0.06 per pound, that's a direct cost savings of over \$2,000 in addition to keeping all of those materials out of the landfill.



Carey Case, Petersburg Ranger District Recycling Coordinator

The success of the recycling program depends on local volunteers at each office and the recycling partnerships the Forest Service has with many local non-profit groups. Both Ketchikan offices have a partnership with Community Connections. Community Connection's mission is "Providing individualized customer guided supports that encourage independence, community belonging, and quality of life." Community Connections is a part of the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Both Petersburg offices have a partnership with a local nonprofit group called Petersburg Indian Affairs, the Petersburg School's Earth Club and the aluminum cans are donated to the Boy and Girl Scouts in Petersburg. Big Brothers/Big Sisters collects recyclable aluminum cans throughout the year in Hoonah.

For more information please visit the [Tongass Environmental Engineering Toolkit](#) and [Recycling Websites](#).

Tongass National Forest Announces Awards

Faith L. Duncan, Interpretive and Conservation Education Program Manager

Congratulations to the five Tongass National Forest employees for being recognized in the first annual interpretation and conservation education forest awards program. Their work reflects excellence in skills and programming. Their extraordinary professionalism and craft have succeeded in encouraging the public to learn more about their public resource.

Each award winner has met the nationally set standards for their profession and emphasis. Being recognized in this way within the Forest workplace gives others an opportunity to recognize the contributions of interpretive and conservation education to resource management on the forest.

Each winner has received a piece of commissioned linoprint artwork created by popular local artist Evon Zerbetz. Each piece of artwork was archivally matted and framed by Colleen Brown of Ketchikan.

This awards and recognition program was acknowledged as a key element in the Forest's 2004 Interpretive and Conservation Education Strategic Plan. Along with Regional awards recognizing Regional Interpretive Excellence, or the Hakala Award and Seasonal Interpreter of the Year Award this comprehensive Forest program serves to recognize interpreters and conservation educators in six new categories, including partnership support,



Jane Smith and Gina Esposito received awards for their outstanding in interpretive program about the fish traps and petroglyphs at Sandy Beach in Petersburg..

volunteerism, programs, management, field positions and new positions.

.....

Mary McGee, Outstanding New Interpreter: Recognized for her interpretive programming at El Capitan Cave, Thorne Bay Ranger District, and Prince of Wales Island.

Karen Maher, Distinguished Conservation Educator: Recognized for her significant contributions to conservation education in the Juneau Area, Juneau Ranger District.

Wayne Ward, Master Interpretive Manager: Recognized for his outstanding work managing the interpretive staff at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, Juneau Ranger District.

Laurie Lamm, Distinguished Interpreter: Recognized for her significant contributions as an Alaska Marine Highway interpreter along the routes of the Inside Passage.

Jane Smith & Gina Esposito, Outstanding Interpretive Program: Their *Sandy Beach Fish Traps and Petroglyphs Guided Walks* in Petersburg have been recognized as an Outstanding Interpretive Program.

Forest Service History Quiz

Congratulations to Kim Kiml, Cordova Ranger District, who won a replica of the 1905 Forest Service Use Book issued by Gifford Pinchot with his instructions for the management of the national forests. The Western Heritage Company published the manual in honor of the Forest Service's 100th anniversary. Kim correctly answered this four-part question in the last issue of *SourDough Notes*:

When Alaska became a state in 1959:

1. Who was Acting Territorial Governor of Alaska?
Waino Edward Hendrickson
2. Who was the Alaska Regional Forester?
Percy D. Hanson
3. Who was Forest Supervisor of the Chugach National Forest?
Malcolm E. Hardy
4. Who was Forest Supervisor of the Tongass National Forest?
Clare Armstrong, North Tongass
C. M. Archbold, South Tongass (yes, a little trick in having two).

Also coming up with the correct answers, and thus creating the need for a drawing to determine the winner, were Jim Thomas, Regional Office, Kay Steffy, Tongass National Forest, and Jim Steward, Tongass National Forest. Retiree Howard Banta receives an honorable mention for getting 3 out of 4!

NEXT QUESTION: What situation and location in Alaska prompted the firing of the first Forest Service Chief, Gifford Pinchot? Send your answers to Teresa Haugh by **March 16, 2009:** (though@fs.fed.us, or U.S. Forest Service, Public Affairs Office, P. O. Box 21628, Juneau, AK 99802)



Winner Kim Kiml. Photo by -TJ Holley.



The next prize is this handsome Forest Service belt buckle.

Alaska Timber Posts Donated to the National Museum of Forest Service History

Twenty-four posts have been donated from across the country for timber framing in the lobby of the National Museum of Forest Service History. Posts are coming from national forests, experimental forests, state forests and tree farms. The geographically diverse tree species will tell the story of how forests supported the development of America. Visitors will read the plaque on each post and a companion brochure.

A Yellow Cedar post donated by Icy Straits Lumber in Hoonah, Alaska, and a Sitka Spruce from the Haines State Forests will represent Alaska forests. The posts are in transit to Missoula, Mont. These posts and any other monetary contributions are helpful and will go a long way toward making this museum dream a reality.



These 11x11x12" posts from Alaska will be used in the lobby of the new National Museum of Forest Service History.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nmfs-history.net/directors.html>