

SourDough Notes

U.S. Forest Service
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Summer 2010



Inside: Look for this logo
for updates on Economic Recovery
projects in the Alaska Region



ON THE COVER:

Economic recovery funds are being used to complete extensive repairs and to improve accessibility at the Trail of Time, Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. Photo by Dale McFarlin. Story begins on page 3.

SourDough Notes

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National Association of Forest Service Retirees

By Retirees Paul McIntosh and John Sandor

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) Board and interested members met at the Doubletree Seattle-Tacoma Airport Hotel, August 22-24, 2010.

The NAFSR is a non-partisan, professional and science-based organization with members consisting of Forest Service retirees with training or experience in natural resources. The NAFSR provides sound and timely professional advice and reports concerning forestry and related subjects; and facilitates communication among members who wish to keep current on natural resource matters.

Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell attended the NAFSR meeting Monday, August 23 to provide members with the opportunity to learn about and discuss current Forest Service issues.

The NAFSR invites retirees to join, and the membership fee is \$25 per year. Darrel Kenops is the NAFSR Executive Director. John Sandor jsandor@ak.net is the current Alaska representative on the NAFSR Board.

Individuals may learn more about the NAFSR at www.fsx.org/nafsreports.html.

Trail of Time Speeds Up

By Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District



“Glacial Speed” no longer equates to “slow” for those who have witnessed the dramatic retreat of Juneau’s Mendenhall Glacier. Plans for the Trail of Time and other projects near the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center (MGVC) have also picked up considerable momentum thanks to Economic Recovery dollars awarded this year under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

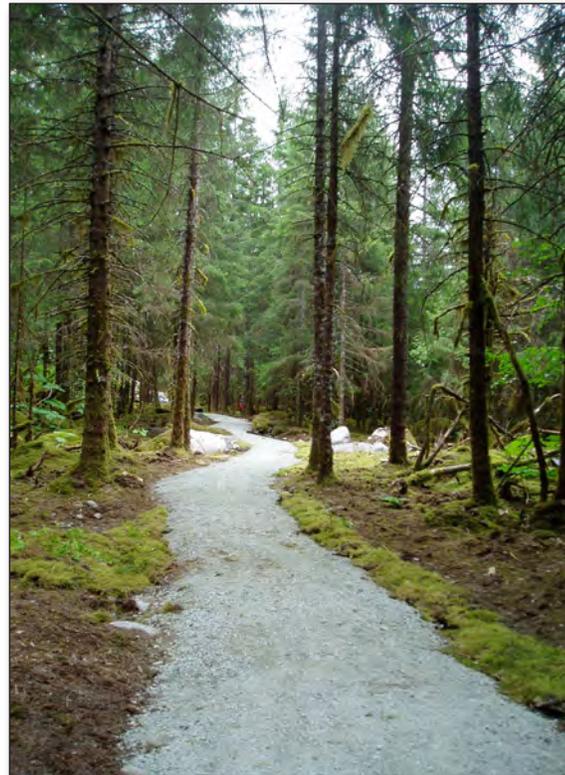
Most visitors to the MGVC area are older folks enjoying one of the many cruise ship packages offered in the Inside Passage. The Mendenhall Glacier is Juneau’s premier attraction for half a million of them. Many of these visitors are mobility limited, and plans to make area trails and facilities more accessible to all visitors have been identified for years. There has also been a considerable backlog in deferred maintenance needs for area structures. Of course, plan implementation takes investment, and until this year, most area projects have been, by necessity, tackled in phases. Economic Recovery funds are now helping us significantly shorten the time frames from planning to project completion.

There are many facets to this project. These include:

- Extensive repairs to the MGVC rock work.
- Rerouting portions of the Trail of Time to meet accessibility standards.
- Refurbishment of Cobble Shelter, the area’s first registration booth, which was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.
- Construction of an accessible ramp behind the MGVC, a glacier observation platform, and new bridge over Steep Creek.
- The production of interpretive panels highlighting a century of history, with emphasis on growing recreational interests in the area.
- Implementation of some bear/human management schemes using fencing.

As we have opened up access to new interpretive sites, where historic features have been swallowed up in post-glacial vegetation succession, even the locals are excited to learn more about the history they have missed in their own backyard.

The majority of trail work has been completed this season, and the remainder should be completed in Summer 2011. Next time you are in Juneau, hurry on up to the MGVC area for a look see. The view changes every day.



Left: Workers bring order to glacial erratics.

Right: This improved section invites hikers to the Trail of Time.

Photos by Peter Cross.



American Recovery and

By Gary Lehnhausen, Fire Safety and

Helping Protect Remote Alaska Native Villages from Wildland Fire

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or ARRA, was passed into law by Congress in an effort to stimulate the U.S. economy through certain kinds of government spending, particularly those that would either create new jobs, or mitigate the possible loss of jobs.

Using authorities of the U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry organization, we were able to obtain ARRA grant funds that could reach across the boundaries of our national forests in Alaska to villages in the Yukon Flats region. The Rural Fuels Reduction Project was designed to create jobs, develop workforce skills and provide workforce training to local village residents. The funds for the project were delivered through the Alaska Division of Forestry, and on-the-ground technical oversight was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Local residents were employed to remove hazardous fuel build-ups around homes and other village infrastructure in Stevens Village, Venetie Landing, Ruby and Beaver, as prescribed in their Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs). About 80 new temporary jobs were created to treat more than 55 acres of hazardous fuels around these villages. Workers mostly removed black spruce and thinned mixed hardwoods for a distance up to 200 feet around homes and infrastructure facilities.

Stevens Village was threatened in 2004



Local residents of Venetie work to clear hazardous fuels build-up.

by the Fort Hamlin Hills Fire which was started by a lightning strike on a hill above the Yukon River southeast of the village. Stevens Village completed a CWPP in 2007, identifying their fire protection needs. ARRA grant funds were used to address their fuels reduction goals. Stevens Village completed their project and expended their grant funds in fall 2009.

Venetie village was threatened several times by wildland fire in the last ten years. The village was potentially threatened in 2003 by the Hadweenzic Fire, the Pingo Fire and Winter Trail Fire in 2004. Also, an escaped dump fire threatened the village in 2008. With the completion of Venetie's CWPP in 2008, the

hazardous fuel reduction needs were identified. The ARRA grant money secured in 2009 allowed Venetie Landing to complete their fuels reduction projects by June 2010.

Hazardous fuels were removed around the new elder housing area, behind the school, and away from a previously established fuel break. Hand crews worked a total of 1,816 hours to remove approximately 40 acres of hazardous fuels. First Chief Patrick Hanson reported that in addition to providing much needed jobs for more than 30 individuals for several months, this project went a long way toward making the community safe from the real threat of wildland fire.

Fuels reduction work around Ruby

Reinvestment Act Updates

Training Specialist, State and Private Forestry



Treating Hazardous Fuels on the Kenai Peninsula

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Spruce Bark Beetle Mitigation Office has identified fuel reduction projects designed to reduce fuel hazards in the wildland urban interface areas on the Kenai Peninsula. These projects were recommended and prioritized in accordance with local Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).

One such project is the treatment of community slash and woody debris resulting from wildland fire mitigation efforts. This community slash disposal site was established about five years ago with other federal grant funds. However, these funds were about to run out before



the ARRA Grant was secured. This site provides a place for local residents to dispose of slash and woody debris removed from their property. Larger material is also available for

firewood cutting and is free to the public.

Other projects associated with this ARRA grant include removal of hazard trees along road corridors; reduction of ground fuels on State Park lands and removal of fuels and adjacent to communities as identified in completed CWPPs.

These projects got a late start this year due to a late snow melt this year but fuel loading survey work is underway now and a contractor has been hired to treat woody debris that has been deposited at the community slash disposal site. It is estimated that when complete this project will have created up to 230 temporary jobs.

village is about 75% complete. Work was delayed last spring due to dry conditions that prevented the safe burning of accumulated slash. They have been granted an extension to December 31, 2010, and plan to complete the remaining work prior to that date. The Alaska Division of Forestry partnered with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for project monitoring and oversight. A chain saw safety course was conducted by the Division of Forestry prior to starting the project. Local fire crew persons from Ruby have completed thinning and pruning trees around the cemetery and a fuel break on the western edge of the community. Slash produced from the project was cut into firewood length and provided to the

community for their use. The remaining slash was piled and burned. So far this project has provided 11 temporary jobs for village residents.

Beaver will be targeting areas to be thinned around remaining untreated structures, primarily residences in the village for the rest of the 2010 summer season. Fuels treatment work was put on hold in May and June because of wildland fire activity in interior Alaska that resulted in fire assignments for the Beaver and Stevens Village fire crews.

Although most of the jobs created by these projects are temporary, the fuels treatment and fire suppression training that was provided to residents of remote Alaska villages will

last for many years. Qualifications and experience gained in these temporary jobs will be entered into the Incident Qualifications and Certification system, which is an information system that tracks training and certifications for wildland firefighters. With an Incident Qualifications Card produced by this system, and individual could be hired to work on incidents such as wildland fires, oil spills, HAZMAT incidents, or hurricane response, anywhere in the country. Their names will remain in the system as long as they keep their qualifications currently.

Fuel breaks that were constructed around villages and other fire protection efforts made possible by ARRA grant funds will help protect villages well into the future.



Mitigating Potential Disaster in Anchorage

By Gary Lehnhausen, Fire & Safety Training Specialist, State & Private Forestry



An expanded trail right of way improved safety by limited fire ignitions and improving fire access for brush rigs.

Homes that are located within and adjacent to forested lands harmed by the spruce bark beetle increase the hazard of wildland fire on the Anchorage hillside. A wildland fire that ignites homes in these areas may likely convert to a structural fire disaster if the homes become the fire's primary fuel source. To mitigate a potential disaster, the Anchorage Fire Department (AFD), the State of Alaska Division of Forestry and the U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry organization are working in partnership to limit the impacts of a wildland fire through Firewise education and treatment of forest fuels. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided grant funds for four separate fuels reduction projects in the Anchorage area.

The first such project is located at Cross Park. This 10-acre park, which is a treasure to its neighbors and the community, contains six acres of mixed hardwood forest. During the spruce bark beetle epidemic, many trees were killed. To reduce the fire danger from accumulated live and dead vegetation at the wildland urban interface, treating these six acres supports a Firewise neighborhood in the adjacent Sky Ranch Estates and other neighborhoods along Birch Road. The Pioneer Peak Hotshot crew spent three days cutting the dead trees at Cross Park to reduce its fuel load. The slash piles will be burned this fall.

The second project began in May 2010. With six days to work between fire assignments, the Hotshots undertook the Chester Creek: Karluk to Lake Otis Parkway Project. Home to the less fortunate, this forested parcel of Municipal park land supports many illegal (homeless) camps and their cook-

ing and warming fires. Due to the dense black spruce, predicted fire behavior presents a significant danger to the homes adjacent to the park. When the Hotshots complete the tree thinning, a mechanized unit will "mulch" the slash in the woods, creating an open stand with little understory.

The first goal was to thin out the black spruce stand in Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Park land behind the Senior Center. The second goal was to thin out sections of black spruce along the Chester Creek Trail between Karluk and Lake Otis Parkway. The cutting portion is approximately 60% completed. A Rayco mower will be used to mulch all of the slash in the woods behind the Senior Center and chip the slash along the trail. Thinning the black spruce in this area deters fire ignitions by juveniles, vagrants and illegal campers while also limiting fire spread through a reduction in fuel loading.

The third project is the Far North Bicentennial Park—Old Rony TrailWatch Project. The Far North Bicentennial Park, which spans 3,626 acres in the heart of the Municipality of Anchorage, hosts trails, wildlife, anadromous streams and a rich suite of recreational opportunities. Due to its great expanse, fighting brush fires in the park often requires aerial support. Along with its partner, TrailWatch, the AFD increased the right-of-way on a main trail into the park allowing brush rigs to access more of the forested acres. A fire occurred here in 2009.

A section of park trail between the BLM Campbell Tract and Tudor Road was thinned by TrailWatch volunteers in June. This project was coordinated through the MOA Parks and Recreation department. The AFD supported the project by contracting to chip the slash along the trail, thereby reducing the fire danger and improving fire access for AFD brush rigs. This project is 50% complete. Expanded trail right-of-way provides for improved safety by limiting fire ignitions and improving fire access for AFD brush rigs. A complementary effort along the same trail system was completed within the BLM Campbell Tract by additional volunteer effort and the BLM's chipper.

The final project in the ARRA fuels project bundle is the Russian Jack Springs North-TrailWatch Project. In 2009, AFD partnered with TrailWatch to

treat a long segment of the trail system through Russian Jack Springs Park. In the northern half of the park, they thinned and chipped black spruce trees along the trail system.

They expanded the trail right-of-way to improve safety by limiting fire ignitions and improving fire access for AFD brush rigs. The work was completed in June 2010. AFD also treat-

ed an additional section to improve the safety around the soccer fields and playground. Thinning trees and pruning the lower limbs deters fire activity by children and vagrants.

Boosting Fire Suppression Capability

By Gary Lehnhausen, Fire & Safety Training Specialist, State & Private Forestry



The Fairbanks area Washington Creek, South Fork Chena, and Salcha Fuels Mitigation Projects were created with economic recovery funds. They also created 41 new positions, including two 20-person fuels mitigation/wildland fire suppression crews and one administrative assistant. Employment began May 3, 2010. During this period, the crews completed training on basic firefighting and chain saw operation. Several crew members also completed training for Crew Boss, Leadership, Ignition Operations, and Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface. Training lasted approximately two weeks and the crews immediately began fuels mitigation work. After just five days, the crews were mobilized to wildland fires. Forty-five days were spent on 10 wildland fire assignments that covered the Fairbanks Area, Tok Area, Tongass National Forest, and Alaska Fire Service protection lands under various ownerships.

The Tiikaan and White Mountain crews are Type 2 Initial Attack crews which is an advanced designation that requires extra training for crew members. These two crews are composed of about 50% Alaska Natives, including the supervisory positions. The crews received excellent performance evaluations on their fire assignments this summer.

Once the ARRA funding expires, it may be necessary to disband the crews; however, since there is a need for the crews, the State of Alaska would like to secure a permanent



Tiikaan Type 2 Initial Attack Crew

funding source if possible. If the crews are disbanded, the State of Alaska Division of Forestry will likely pick up several crew members as regular permanent technicians. The following is a summary of the fuels mitigation projects they have been working on this summer:

- The **Washington Creek Fuels Mitigation Project** includes two treatment areas. The first unit is adjacent to McCloud subdivision, and the second treatment area is adjacent to Himalaya Road with a design that is intended to work in concert with the shear blading contract that was awarded last quarter. The hand crew work is expected to be completed by August 15, 2010.
- The **South Fork Chena Fuels Mitigation Project** is currently being re-evaluated because of concerns about potential military ordinance in the proposed treatment area. Project managers are considering a slightly different layout of the fuel break; however, the project completion date is still expected by early September 2010.
- The **Salcha Fuels Mitigation Project** is also being re-evaluated due to difficulties with a patchwork of private land ownership mixed with State ownership. This ownership pattern has increased the difficulty of project layout for the proposed fuel break, but the completion date is expected by September 30, 2010.

The first priority for the Tiikaan and White Mountain Crews is to complete the fuels mitigation work for which the ARRA grant funds were provided. However, if the fire season in the Lower 48 states continues beyond September, the crews will likely be mobilized there later this fall.



Recovery Act Project Tackles Invasive Plants

Story & photos by Trish Wurtz, Invasive Plant Program Coordinator, Forest Health Protection

Remember the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed in February, 2009? It may seem like a long time ago, but many Alaska Region employees have spent the months since then helping to coordinate, carry out and oversee the wide array of projects that were funded by this legislation in our Region. This is the story of one such project.

The primary focus of the Recovery Act is jobs. The Alaska Weed Management project, a \$1.14 million cooperative agreement between R10 Forest Health Protection and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD), has resulted in 18 new positions at AACD, including a project manager and budget assistant, 13 new invasive plant coordinators, and three weed control crew members. The invasive plant coordinators (IPCs) are employed for one full year, and are located in a diverse assortment of communities around the state. Weeds know no administrative boundaries, so the work these people do will not only help their communities, but will also prevent the spread of invasive plants into our national forests.

In April 2010, the 13 newly-hired IPCs met in Anchorage for a week of training presented by Forest Service and other agency personnel from within and outside Alaska. IPCs learned about the problem of invasive plants, what invasives are found in Alaska, about the Alaska Exotic Plant Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC) and about the Weed Ranking System. They were issued cameras, GPS units, laptops, weed whackers, backpack sprayers, and safety gear, all of which will remain with AACD when their

12-month tenures are finished. They learned how to identify Alaska's invasive plants, how to submit survey data to the AKEPIC database, and about methods of successful public outreach. They studied and took the

exam to become state-certified pesticide applicators. Then, they fanned out to 13 communities around the state, where they hit the ground running.

Since then, the IPCs have shown themselves to be an energetic, creative and capable bunch. All over the state, new species and new infestations are being documented, and known distributions extended. The Cordova IPC found three Japanese knotweed infestations there, the first time this highly invasive species has been documented in that community. The Kodiak IPC has identified two infestations of plants previously unknown in Alaska. The IPCs in Dillingham and Aniak are conducting the first-ever weed surveys in those areas.

Near Talkeetna and Homer, IPCs are working with local farmers to deal with large, established infestations of orange hawkweed and fall dandelion (*Leontodon*). The Kenai and Seward IPCs have convinced local and state government agencies to step up their roadside mowing efforts. Mowing is a simple way to



Fairbanks Rollergirls pulled more than 1,200 pounds of weeds in Fairbanks' first "Weed Smackdown" competition.

slow the spread of weeds along road rights-of-way. In Juneau, Cordova, Palmer and Fairbanks, IPCs worked with local partners to burn, dig, whack, spray or tarp significant infestations of reed canarygrass. The Kodiak IPC will work with the roving crew next month to begin chemical control of an orange hawkweed infestation at a remote, abandoned cannery site. While some herbicides are very effective against orange hawkweed, chemicals are often unavailable in rural Alaskan communities, and shipping them can be problematic. The IPCs are creating a template on orange hawkweed control that can be modified according to what is available for purchase in each local community. The goal is to give rural residents enough information that they can establish their own multi-year control plans, with or without the use of chemicals.

Great creativity is being shown in public outreach efforts. Posters, flyers, mailings, and handouts have been developed, each with its own local flavor. Public service announcements are being broadcast

and newspaper articles written. Numerous workshops and weed pulls have been held. An innovative weed scavenger hunt drew crowds in Juneau. In Fairbanks, a competitive “Weed Smack-down” drew 88 people who organized into teams and vied to pull more weeds than the Fairbanks Rollergirls, a female roller derby team.

The “Alaska Weed Management” IPCs realize that they can’t effect lasting change in just one year. But they are striving to give local communities enough information to continue work on invasives long after this Recovery Act project has ended.

Fairbanks IPC Darcy Echeverry and Doug Koester (Kenai Peninsula CWMA) discuss plant identification at the Anchorage training session.



Volunteers Battle Invasives

By Harry Tullis, Lead Wilderness Ranger, Admiralty Island National Monument

If you asked one of the volunteers they’d tell you how much fun they had spending July 10-17, 2010, on the secluded beaches of Admiralty Island. Having fun, however, was not the only goal. This dedicated group of volunteers traveled to a remote corner of the Kootznoowoo Wilderness to spend the week on their hands and knees diligently pulling the unwelcome invader Black Bindweed (*Polygonum convolvulus*). The otherwise pristine shoreline of Whitewater Bay is lined with this invasive plant and getting rid of it would be no easy task. The effort was made possible by Wilderness Volunteers, a nonprofit which organizes a variety of volunteer projects for government agencies. The volunteers came from Florida to Oregon and all points in-between,



Volunteers pull invasive plants on Admiralty Island.

including a SEACC staff member from Juneau. For many, it was their first time to Alaska.

Previous efforts by agency personnel to quell the invasive tide were limited and less successful than we hoped. So when SEACC proposed using a Wilderness Volunteer group for an Admiralty project, the decision to tackle the bindweed in Whitewater Bay was the obvious choice.

The planning and coordination began in November since the logistics were significant. During the ferry trip to Angoon, volunteers were treated to a breaching humpback whale, and were thrilled with the Alaskan landscape. Despite the uncooperative weather that delayed boat operations by a day and a half, the volunteers wasted no time getting to work upon

our arrival in Whitewater. Indeed, several hours of pulling were completed before camp was even set up.

There was more bindweed in more locations than we anticipated, and despite significant efforts, the group was still finding and pulling weeds as the boats were idling to leave four days later. Tens of thousands of weeds were pulled; many more remain. Direction from the Chief’s 10-year Wilder-

ness Stewardship Challenge and the Tongass Invasive Plant strategy provide impetus for this project, so we’ll be back to complete the job. Many beaches are still infested with viable seeds and a multiyear effort will be needed to eradicate them, but the volunteers felt good about being able to survey all the beaches in Whitewater and about cleaning up approximately 500 pounds of beach garbage.

Each volunteer exclaimed how wonderful it was to experience the lushness of the rainforest, stepping in bear tracks while walking the beaches beneath eagles’ wings and surrounded by the tranquility of the Alaskan Wilderness. This experience created advocates for Wilderness and bear conservation, and the agency developed a wonderful new partner.



Invasive Black Bindweed



SAGA Crew at Mole Harbor

By Teresa Haugh, Editor

The sounds of hammering and chattering permeated the air the on Admiralty Island cross-island canoe trail. Although it was early in the morning, the trail crew at Mole Harbor had already eaten breakfast, tidied their camp site, secured their food (it's brown bear country), donned their mosquito netting and hardhats, and hiked to their work site.

I hurried to catch up. I had been invited to the island by Wilderness Field Manager John Neary to see how our Economic Recovery funds were being put to good use. We were joined by Joe Parrish, Director, Southeast Alaska Guidance Association (SAGA), who filled our floatplane with the irresistible smells of hot pizza that he brought for his crew. On the way to Mole Harbor, we landed and picked up Forestry Technician Robert Marek, who oversees the work crews on Admiralty.

Since 1986, the Forest Service has been a partner with SAGA to fill the gap created by the loss of

the Youth Conservation Corps and Young Adult Conservation Corps in the Tongass National Forest. SAGA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve lives, lands, and communities in Alaska through service learning. This summer, bolstered by Economic Recovery funds, the Forest Service has been able to employ up to three SAGA crews on the island at a time.

I met seven young adults on one SAGA crew. They traveled from all over the U.S. to work in Alaska. Paul Kastler, a civil engineering student from the University of Colorado in Boulder, found out May 23 that he had a job in Alaska, but had one week to move and get there. "I just had time to grab some gear and jump on a plane," he said. The crew's engineering skills became obvious as they explained the process for digging holes in the mud, removing rocks, placing and leveling logs, and topping them with stringers, sills, and puncheons (all types of framing used in the trail reconstruction.)

The puncheons, which are heavy planks, were planed and cut at Hoonah's Icy Straits Lumber and brought in by floatplane. The rest of the materials were created the old-fashioned way.

"Anybody can learn how to use a chainsaw," they told me, proud of the primitive skills they had gained.

"It's easy to build if you have an electric drill." All their holes were hand drilled.

Since they were working in a designated wilderness area, they did not use chainsaws, ATVs, or wheelbarrows. The puncheons were carried to the work site in 60-pound bundles on backpack frames; over 50% of the body weight of one diminutive crew member. Neary and



Robert Marek and Mark Wagner

Parrish helped by hauling load after load of puncheon during their stay. The crew packed in buckets of gravel used to fill in mud holes. Each evening, after working all day, the crew cleaned their Pulaski's and shovels in the stream, and sharpened their saws, hatchets, and axes.

The SAGA crew said they had gained an appreciation for the people who pioneered Alaska. While the crew used primitive tools, they were grateful for the technical gear they had in tents, sleeping bags, bug nets and rubber boots.

Crew member Chavala Kondor had looked for an AmeriCorps position in her home state of New York.



Elizabeth McLaurin



Joe Welsh

To please her parents, she also applied to work in Alaska as a backup plan. Alaska panned out. “The hard work I imagined,” she said. “The rain, not so much.” She quickly bought new rain gear after she arrived. Back home, her college interdisciplinary studies were weighted largely in the humanities, and she speaks fluent Spanish. She would like to work with immigrant refugees one day, or “A job at the UN wouldn’t be bad.”

Sara DeLeo, from Massachusetts, said she got a job after college working in the aviation industry. Since flying private jets is a luxury business, it suffered with the collapse of the economy. “I lasted for a year before I was cut,” she said. “Ironically, economic recovery funds gave a new job to someone who lost their job. And I’m learning new skills.”

Sara Nieft, from Wisconsin, pounded nails nonstop while she talked about sea kayaking for the first time in Alaska. She was amazed by the wildlife, and marveled at seeing whales and sea otters right off the beach. She would like to stay in Juneau for a while to sample the winter skiing and snowboarding. “And maybe see what it’s like to work on a fishing boat,” she said.

Mark Wagner served as team leader and mentor to the first-timers on the crew. I spoke with him about the Forest Service mission, the fact that many Forest Service employees will soon reach retirement age, and the necessity and



SAGA Crew Elizabeth McLaurin, Joe Welsh, Chavala Kondor, Paul Kastler, Sara DeLeo, Sara Nieft, and Mark Wagner. Photo by Joe Parrish.

desirability of connecting his generation with government careers in natural resources. Mark said, “The great thing about this job—besides helping others become more confident in their skills—is making connections. I got an internship with the Forest Service by working through the Utah Conservation Corps.” Mark is hopeful his SAGA experience will continue to open a career path to do the kind of work he loves.

Like Mark, Elizabeth McLaren, or “Liz” is an experienced worker. Through her previous stint on a fire crew in Utah, she became an expert at using a chainsaw. She showed her adaptability to working in the wilderness, however. She stripped the



“K&K Construction”: Chavala Kondor and Paul Kastler

bark off a tree using an ax, and put her muscles to use on the cross saw that felled it.

Joe Welsh is known as the “funny one” with a sense of humor. Although Joe came from North Carolina, he found that he loves the west and the Pacific Ocean. His dream is doing trails work on an island in Hawaii.

The work and conversation of the crew buzzed through the day. Paul admitted, “We can get pretty philosophical out here.”

Besides an occasional swear word that came out when a notched log didn’t come out level, or a boulder blocked the path, I heard:

“I like salmon berries better than raspberries.”

“That pizza last night was the best I ever had.”

“I’m eating steak when I go to Anchorage. And Mexican.” (Food was a popular topic.)

“It’s either be wet from the rain or wet from the sweat.”

“Hold the ax safely, move your feet.”

“Can you believe I’m still digging?”

“Come on bug, not up the sleeve!”

“When I leave here I wear polka-dotted high heels—black with little bows on the front.”

At the end of a long day, as I turned to walk down the trail to meet the floatplane, I called out my thanks and appreciation to the crew. I heard a voice say, “You’re welcome, if you need anything else, contact my agent.” I smiled, knowing her hardy work ethic was the best agent she could ever have.

Sawing for Salmon

Prince William Sound Zone Fisheries Crew Restores Salmon Habitat in Juania Creek

By Luca Adelfio, Fisheries Technician, Cordova Ranger District

Donning protective chaps over waders and hardhats over polarized glasses, the Prince William Sound (PWS) zone fisheries crew fired up chain saws for a week of timber thinning and in-stream structure building. The work took place in the Juania Creek watershed on the western flank of Hinchinbrook Island, 35 miles from Cordova.

Sixty-seven acres of the watershed were clear cut in the late 1950s. During the logging, logs and root wads were removed from Juania Creek's channel and banks. These large woody materials are a key component of a healthy stream ecosystem because they slow the stream's current, creating pools. Pools provide cover for juvenile salmon and pool tails are coho salmon's preferred spawning habitat.

At Juania Creek, the negative impacts of the logging are obvious. Without logs in the stream, the channel is broad and featureless. The second growth is a crowded stand of skinny Sitka spruce. In the riparian zone, these thin spruce boles haven't provided the large diameter woody material that is so important to aquatic life. In the rest of the watershed, the trees are growing so close together that they block out the sunlight necessary for a diverse understory.

To restore the watershed, the PWS fisheries crew selectively felled trees from the periphery of the riparian zone to create five large wood in-stream structures without threatening bank stability. The crew interwove the cut boles to form log jams. The largest logs were anchored



Sean Meade works on one of the five log jams the fisheries crew created to provide more pool habitat for coho salmon. Photo by Brian Neilson.

amongst the standing trees on the banks to help keep the structures in place. Care was taken to ensure the structures look as natural as possible.

Thinning the riparian zone to create these structures will have additional long-term benefits. With less competition, the remaining spruce will grow larger, faster. Many of these streamside trees will eventually fall into Juania Creek, providing habitat for future generations of salmon.

To further improve conditions in the watershed, the fisheries crew waded out of the stream and into the forest. "This was more than just a fish project," explains project biologist Ken Hodges. "We looked at Juania Creek from a watershed perspective to address the wide ranging effects of clear cut logging."

The fisheries crew selectively cut 20 clearings outside of the riparian zone. These 30- to 60-foot clearings simulate the natural openings in an old growth forest, allowing light to penetrate through the crowded spruce to the forest floor. The idea is that more sunlight will increase diversity in the undergrowth, providing wintertime browse for Sitka black-tailed deer and improving forest health throughout the watershed.

The Shelter Bay public use cabin is located near Juania Creek. Enhancing habitat conditions for coho salmon and black-tailed deer will increase recreational and subsistence opportunities for cabin users and other visitors in this designated Backcountry Management Area.



Looking up through a clearing created by the crew. The 30- to 60-foot openings were cut to mimic the natural clearings in an old growth stand. Photo by Luca Adelfio.

New Forest Protection Officers Complete Training

By John Burick, Criminal Investigator, Anchorage, Alaska

On June 11, 2010, eleven combined Chugach and Tongass Forest Service employees became the region's newest forest protection officers (FPOs) after successfully completing the required week-long training which was hosted in Anchorage, Alaska.

FPO responsibilities include observing and reporting, in a timely manner, violations of Federal laws and regulations to special agents or law enforcement officers and attempting to gain voluntary compliance by informing and educating forest users who appear to be in violation of Agency rules and regulations. An FPO may also serve as a Security Specialist Level 2 (SEC2) in incident camps if otherwise qualified.

After becoming certified, FPOs are authorized to issue citations to individuals that are not complying with the Agency's 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 242 and 261 prohibitions. Excluding certain limitations such as FPOs working alone at night, suspects displaying weapons, consuming alcohol, or the presence of illicit drugs, FPOs help to ensure the protection of National Forest System land and assist and support the Agency's law enforcement program, which has a limited number of commissioned officers throughout the region. For employees interested in becoming commissioned law enforcement officers, the FPO program can be a gateway to a full-time enforcement position.

Training for FPOs started with the successful completion of a background check. During the first three days of classroom training, students receive basic instruction in their authority to enforce laws, FPO safety,



FPO Mel Flynn explains to a fisherman how to pay his citation after FPO Flynn and FPO Brandon Blair observed the man fishing without a current fishing license. Photo by John Burick.

introduction to the Agency's prohibitions, completing law enforcement forms, such as warning, incident, and violation notices, and the federal judicial process. Classroom instruction is then applied as the FPO recruits are presented with a number of field scenarios similar to what they might encounter while performing their duties. The last day of the training included a mock trial with a Federal Magistrate Judge, U.S. Attorney, and a defendant who was repeatedly issued a violation notice by FPOs for fishing without a license during the scenarios. The course was completed following a written exam.



FPOs Jeremy Felsen and Eric Koontz contact a forest user regarding his fire during scenario field exercises. Photo by Ed Decker.



Patrol Captain Chris Lampshire answers questions after completing the field scenarios at the end of the day. Photo by John Burick.

Beyond Textbooks and Test Tubes

Story and photos by Judy Suing, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest

Three seventh-graders from Sitka's Blatchley Middle School stand in a stream, enthusiastically filling ten-gallon buckets with gravel to secure a log structure that will improve salmon habitat in the Starrigavan Valley. The cold, rainy weather does little to dampen their progress or their spirits.

"Work is fun!" shouts one boy as he continues to fill buckets.

This work is part of the Starrigavan Stream Team, a Forest Service program led by Sitka fisheries biologist Rob Miller and conducted with help from the National Park Service, Sitka Conservation Society, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and others to get kids in the woods and experience science beyond text books and test tubes.

In the field, the students apply their knowledge of stream invertebrates by collecting them in nets and sorting them into ice cube trays by species. The number and diversity of invertebrates they find will help them describe the health of the stream.

Some of the students are quick to recognize the different invertebrates they learned about in class and they begin sorting them with tweezers. Other students need some time to overcome their initial repulsion to working with the tiny critters:

"Eww...gross!"

"I dare you to eat one!"

"Don't touch me with that thing!"



Students from Blatchley Middle School demonstrate their might after constructing a log structure to improve fish habitat.

After a few minutes of watching their peers work and being handed a pair of tweezers and an identification chart, even these reluctant students begin classifying these indicator species.

Next, students get first-hand experience measuring the pH and dissolved oxygen in the stream and learn how water chemistry affects aquatic organisms.

Braving the chilly water, students then measure stream cross-sections and pebble sizes to understand the quality of the stream habitat and how fish and other aquatic species make use of stream ripples and pools.

These activities are hardly busy-work. The Forest Service uses the data collected by the students to help determine the long-term effects of stream restoration in the Starrigavan Valley. Blatchley math teacher Melissa Robins will take these data sets back to the classroom for her students to practice their statistics lessons.

When the students get to the

stream restoration station the goal is not just to improve the habitat for the salmon that the larger community relies on, but it also gives the students a tangible reminder of the lessons they learned in this outdoor classroom. The idea is for the students to come back and see how the log structures they helped to install improved habitat for fish and other wildlife.

In addition to getting kids outside to explore the natural

world, one of Miller's goals for this program is to provide students an opportunity to explore careers working in the woods. Miller himself was inspired to work for the Forest Service after taking an outdoor field course in the third grade.



Geoff Smith, National Park Service, assists students in collecting stream invertebrates. Photo by Judy Suing.

“If we could get at least three or four of these kids each year interested in this kind of work, I’d be happy,” said Miller.

When asked about their favorite activity of the day, Michael Boose and Trevor Shoening easily reply with bug identification and stream restoration. After a thoughtful pause, Michael turns to his friend, “Hey Trevor, maybe you and I should go and work for the Forest Service.”

With that ringing endorsement, Miller should consider this year’s Stream Team program a success.



A student tests the water quality of a tributary in the Starrigavan Valley.

Alaska Region to Join Western Collective

By Michele Parker, Environmental Engineer, Tongass National Forest

The Alaska Region is joining the Sustainable Operations Western Collective Board. The Western Collective is a focused sustainable operations program that includes R1, R2, R3, R4, R6, and Rocky Mountain Research Station employees, and now R10. The Alaska Region will formally join the Western Collective by signing the charter at the Board meeting in Albuquerque, the week of September 7. The Deputy Regional Forester and I will serve as board staff and board staff member respectively.

The Western Collective facilitates the overall coordination and collaboration of sustainable operations practices throughout the Forest Service, while providing the management and leadership climate to ensure such activities and practices are successful. Joining the Western Collective will create opportunities to promote and broaden Forest Service sustainable operations capabilities in the Alaska Region through networking and knowledge sharing. The objectives of the Western Collective are to:

- Incorporate and maintain long-term programs, practices, tools, and policies that integrate environmental footprint principles throughout the organization by removing barriers and promoting the use of appropriate technologies;
- Institute a culture that emphasizes education, rewards positive actions, and recognizes achievements that reduce our environmental footprint in long lasting ways;
- Integrate environmental footprint considerations into daily decisions, habits, planning and operations; and
- Increase capacity and capabilities to implement Sustainability principles throughout the region.

The Alaska Region has made significant progress in fulfilling its vision of sustainable leadership. Demonstrating national leadership, the Tongass is one of only six pilot forests in the Forest Service to join the EPA Climate Leaders program. Following Climate Leaders



Meeting of the Western Collective

well-established protocol, the Tongass has developed their [First Greenhouse Gas \(GHG\) Inventory](#) and [First Environmental Footprint Report](#). This baseline inventory includes FY2007 emissions from stationary combustion sources, the vehicle fleet, purchased electricity, and chartered flights. Conducting the inventory provides a better understanding of emissions from forest operations, which enables employees to work towards meeting realistic emissions reduction goals. The Tongass’ sustainable leadership is evident regionally. The Chugach National Forest is following Tongass’ lead by undertaking a similar environmental inventory and sustainability action plan. Tongass employees are offering support to the Chugach employees by sharing lessons learned and sustainability resources. Joining the Western Collective will provide opportunities for the Region to share and network nationally.

For more information, please contact me at mmparker@fs.fed.us or visit <http://fsweb/tongass/GreenTeam/greenindex.shtml>.

Middle Ridge Cabin

Communal Wealth of the Tongass

Story and photos by Judy Suing, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest

The second-growth spruce logs of the Middle Ridge Cabin in Wrangell may illustrate the budding young-growth timber industry in Southeast Alaska, but the cabin itself serves as a reminder of the real wealth of the Tongass—its communities. Without the help of community members across Southeast, the year-round, ADA-accessible cabin would still be just a vision.

Keith Appleman and Dee Galla of the Wrangell District struggled year after year from 2003 to 2008 to secure funding for the cabin. The cabin was finally constructed in 2009 during a workshop in Sitka, hosted by the University of Alaska. Eleven students, including three from Wrangell, built the cabin using wood from a restoration thinning project in the Star-rigavan Valley.

The cabin was then dismantled so it could be shipped by barge to Wrangell and reassembled by a youth crew from the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association's (SAGA) Serve Alaska Youth Corps program.

Before the cabin could be reassembled, the site had to be prepared and the logs transported up the steep road to Middle Ridge. BW Enterprises of Wrangell, Southeast Contracting of Petersburg, and sawmill owner Mike Allen, Jr. all contributed to prepare the site, lay the foundation, and deliver the logs to the final cabin location.

The four-member SAGA crew completed the final construction of the cabin in the fall of 2009 with help from Wrangell District employees and under the direction of Richard Musick, one of the log construction instructors in Fairbanks who helped teach the University of Alaska cabin construction workshop.

Seniors from Wrangell High School constructed and donated the furniture inside the two-story cabin.

The potluck lunch recognizing the partners involved in making the cabin a success was also a community effort.

Representatives from Juneau down to Ketchikan joined Wrangell residents to celebrate the achievement. After attendees had the opportunity to admire the craftsmanship of the cabin, members of the Forest Service, SAGA, and the Stikine Sportsman's Association gave speeches.



New Middle Ridge Cabin in the Wrangell Ranger District.



The new cabin furniture was constructed by seniors from Wrangell High School.

Afterwards, everyone gathered for hot dogs and beverages provided by the Stikine Sportsman's Association, in addition to delicious side dishes and desserts from those in attendance.

The cabin will continue to be maintained by the community through the Adopt-A-Cabin Program. The generosity of the Stikine Sportsman's Association will allow continued recreation opportunities for Wrangell residents and visitors.

Peterson Lake Trail Refurbished

By Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District



Photos taken at Peterson Mine in 1912. Left: Assumed to be looking east in the vicinity of Adit W4 and inclined shaft W5. Right: Assumed to be looking south. Courtesy of Alaska State Library. (P01-2245) (P01-2318)

Like most of trails on Juneau Ranger District, the trail to Peterson Lake originated as a route to mineral riches, specifically gold. In 1901, John Peterson staked his mining claim near his namesake lake which is about four miles from the seashore. He set up his homestead in Pearl Harbor along Lynn Canal, and he and his wife Marie raised two daughters named Irma and Margaret.

Early on, Peterson established a trail to his claims. In 1909, he leased his claims to Alaska Consolidated Mines which built a tram. In 1910, he took back control of his claims.

Peterson's tramway, which consisted of a long wooden platform with rails, used horse power to pull carts loaded with ore and supplies in and out of the mining area. Peterson worked the mine with his family until his death in 1916. His wife and daughters continued to successfully operate the mine until 1923, their tenacity being a subject of newspaper articles of the time. It was not a rich mine, as it only produced 211 ounces of gold and eight ounces of silver, but the "color" was a welcome supplement to their subsistence lifestyle.

In 1985, volunteers built a U.S. Forest Service recreation cabin along Peterson Lake. The cabin is located across the lake from the mine ruins. The trail to the cabin diverges from the historic tram route at about the halfway, or two-mile mark, and continues to the cabin. The Peterson Lake Cabin is rented over 150 nights a year. The trail is also very popular with day hikers and skiers because it rises less than 1,000 feet over its four-mile length.

When Juneau's road system expanded to the area decades ago, fishing in Peterson Lake and Peterson Creek became more popular. Anglers shake their cabin fever fishing for steelhead in the spring, and prepare for the winter months trying for chums and cohos in the fall. Cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden char also offer angling opportunities. Because of this valuable fishery, the habitat adjacent to the stream, and the access provided by the trail, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) bought some of the original Peterson homestead for the enjoyment of the public and protection of the resource in 1988.

With this much traffic, it is no wonder the century old trail needs some refurbishment. In 2009, a partnership between the ADF&G and the USFS was formed to rehabilitate the first ¼ mile of the trail. This includes a 300-ft. reroute at the trailhead to address a steep grade. The ADF&G also partnered with the Southeast Alaska Guidance Association for trail work, and the USFS provided its trail crew plus project oversight. The Juneau District successfully competed for Legacy Roads and Trails funds to support the project. The ADF&G's funds came from the sale of sport fishing licenses, and dollars returned to States from taxes on the sale of fishing equipment.

The most important and difficult task was planning renovations in a manner that hardens the trail while protecting heritage resources, specifically the remains of the tramway. The plan is being implemented this August. Anglers, cabin patrons, skiers, day hikers, habitat enhancers, heritage specialists, and recreation managers are smiling. I'm guessing the Peterson family would be proud.

Blazing Paddles Part 2:

By Jennifer Mac Donald, Special Uses/

My story begins not at the start of our trip, but smack in the middle of a climactic moment of coffee-drinker despair. I know all of you coffee drinkers out there are at this very instant captivated. The cup of rich brown nectar next to you will be forgotten for a moment while you wonder what this story could possibly have to do with Forest Service work in Alaska. The mere thought of a coffee drinker in despair is enough to distract your interest from the next few sips of that deliciously enticing roasted bean of a brew. Read on bean worshippers.

Before continuing, I should come clean about my disposition toward the beanificent potion and say, that although the aroma is enticing, what is readily regarded by many as the elixir of life is, to me, just an occasional quaff. In other words, I am not a true coffee drinker. I cannot quite comprehend the deep-seated craving that many have for the morning (...afternoon...evening?) tonic.

Now that you have a clear picture of my perspective on the dark potion, let's get on with the story.

It was well past dawn on the fourth day of our eight-day kayak monitoring trip in the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness. Our two volunteers (Marta Martinsen and Cherie Creek, both Sitka residents) and I were nestled in our warm sleeping bags, snoozing away the early dawn hours, oblivious to the frantic, nail-biting, anxiety-filled search going on in our



Marta Martinsen, Jim Case, and Cherie Creek take a lunch break. Photo by Jen Mac Donald.

camp. Oblivious, that is, until I hear “uh, Jen” in a *stern, means business, no-messing around* voice.

“Yeah?” I say, wondering what dire emergency was occurring. It would have to be dire to warrant waking someone up before the agreed upon time, especially your new co-worker whom you're just getting to know on this trip and would likely want to establish an amenable working relationship. So, as I'm preparing myself for something dire, I hear, again in a *no kidding around, this is very serious!!* tone, “I can't find the coffee.”



Marta Martinsen cooks dinner. Photo by Jen Mac Donald.

Yes, you read that correctly. Jim Case, my fellow wilderness ranger from the Sitka Ranger District, was waking me up to tell me that he couldn't find the coffee. There were several responses that passed through my mind but, in the interest of preserving harmony among the group I did get up and stumble around the camp searching for the dreaded bean, wishing all the while I was still warm and cozy

in my sleeping bag enjoying the remaining 45 minutes of cherished sleep. Little did I know that Marta and Cherie were snickering away in their tent, after also responding to that initial call of distress wondering, “Is it a bear? *Did we camp in the tidal zone! What's going on!!*” Needless to say, we found the coffee (I won't say where, harrumph!), and with four more days to go, averted certain disaster.

I joke, but what this bean-dreamy concoction allowed this particular group to accomplish in eight days time is worthy indeed of sharing.

We covered 92 miles of shoreline from Falcon Arm to Goulding Bay. Along this route, we monitored and rehabilitated campsites, measured for solitude opportunities, observed for outfitter/guide use, inspected sites under permit (and found a site not under permit), monitored heritage sites and with Marta's keen eye, possibly discovered a new heritage site,

Ode to a Coffee Drinker

Wilderness, Sitka Ranger District

collected yellow cedar samples for the Forest Sciences Laboratory yellow cedar genetic studies, and made an amazing discovery of moose droppings.

Moose, you wonder? Yes, those long-legged stalwarts of the boreal forest left us some keen evidence that they have at least visited Chichagof Island. To be absolutely certain, Jim collected a sample for the Department of Fish and Game in a hastily emptied bag of “Texas Red-Hot Nuggets” jerky (seemed appropriate)—a prize of the trip for sure.

We felt very lucky to have experienced other fascinating wildlife throughout the trip as well. A brown bear welcomed us at our first night’s campsite. Humpback whales spouted in front of us, and later serenaded us through the evening hours with their sounding in Smooth Channel. A sea otter surfacing at the bow of my boat making us both gasp.

We had a near encounter with a brown bear in Didrickson Bay. Suffice it to say, I credit coffee to some extent for Jim’s quick-thinking and booming warning to Cherie and I while landing at a campsite that was, unbeknownst to us, currently occupied by a brown bear. I’m certain the exalted brew



Cherie Creek acts as a yard stick to measure the gear. Photo by Jim Case.

played some role in our lucky slip from possible encounter.

From the paddle blazing slog across the entrance to Khaz Bay early on, the near coffee collapse, the moose poop delight, sea otter surprise, and our bear-heightened senses; it was a first visit to the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness to remember.

Take the Safety Quiz

By William Moulton, Tongass Safety Officer

All readers of Sourdough Notes are eligible. To win, simply answer the questions below, responding to each question by number in a memo or document. In your response, please quote an appropriate, specific reference like the FSH 6709.11.04.4 (3) or 29 CFR 1910.132(a).

First place winner will receive the ultimate survival kit for home or family with a 32 oz. water bottle, carabiner, multi-function tool, whistle/compass, flashlight with batteries, survival blanket, hand warmer packets, etc. Second place winner will receive two heavy duty flashlights with batteries. The winners will be announced in the Fall issue.

Responses to be judged by the Tongass Safety Committee for appropriateness and accuracy. In the event of a tie, a drawing will be held to determine the winner. Safety Offices, former Safety Officers, members of the Tongass Safety Committee and Collateral Duty Safety Officers are not eligible.

Replies are due to Bill Moulton by October 1, 2010
Email: bmoulton@fs.fed.us, or
Tongass National Forest
P. O. Box 309 • Petersburg, AK 99833-0309

1. What are the proper settings for the tool rest and tongue guard on a bench grinder?
2. What activities are prohibited when driving a FS vehicle?
3. What is the “Rule of 10” in stream crossing?
4. Fall arrest systems, safety net systems or guardrail systems should be used when working how many feet above the ground?
5. Why should you fill gas cans on the ground?
6. All watercraft operator trainees should have a minimum of how many hours of experience operating in similar watercraft in local Alaska Waters?
7. All permanent and temporary field camps (used more than ten days) will have what major first aid supplies?
8. In the event of an employee accident/injury what is NOT transmitted over the radio?

Genetics-Regeneration Project to Help Yellow-cedar Adapt to Climate

By Sheila Spores, Silviculturist, and Paul Hennon, Research Plant Pathologist

The forests of Southeast Alaska have been experiencing a widespread mortality of yellow-cedar trees due to a phenomenon termed yellow-cedar decline. Yellow-cedar trees have been dying for more than 100 years on over a half a million acres in Southeast Alaska. Mortality is caused by freezing injury involving thaw-freeze weather cycles in late winter and early spring. Yellow-cedar trees become physiologically active during mild weather and fine roots are then injured during cold events if snow is not present.

Scientists and managers have been working to devise a conservation strategy for yellow-cedar on the Tongass. The strategy includes actions such as salvaging dead yellow-cedar trees to capture the value and allow regeneration of other tree species on that site. The restoration and facilitated migration of yellow-cedar to cooler sites or on well drained soils where decline is not predicted to occur can help to establish and maintain cedar in areas where it can thrive. Silvicultural practices such as site preparation, planting, and thinning may be implemented on favorable sites to maintain populations of this valuable tree species.

A part of this conservation strategy for yellow-cedar is to develop a genetics program aimed at evaluating genetic sources for slow spring dehardening and freezing resistance. Other factors that may improve the survival and establishment of yellow-cedar are trees with fast growth so they can compete with faster growing western hemlock and trees with high foliage terpene levels to make them less palatable to deer. A



Scott McDonald, Britta Schroeder, Chris Scott, Pat Tierney, Sheila Spores, Paul Hennon, Billy Steele. Photos by Sheila Spores.

cooperative project called the Common Garden Study was established this year through the combined effort of the Tongass National Forest, R10 State and Private Forestry, and



Paul Hennon with a planted and flagged yellow-cedar seedling.

the Pacific Northwest Research Station. Additional funding was also provided through partnerships with American Forests and the Western Bark Beetle Initiative. For many years, silviculturists across the forest have collected yellow-cedar cones and the resulting seeds are stored in the Regional Seed Cache in Petersburg. Trees from 16 of these seed lots were grown as one year old seedlings and then planted this year. Four sites, one in Juneau and three on Prince of Wales Island, were planted with 1,600 trees at each site. The trees were planted in-house in a large effort by silviculturists from across the forest and employees from the PNW research lab. R.D. Parks and Chuck Ressler, who manage the seed cache, helped prepare the cone seed for growing seedlings. The logistics of growing tree seedlings for planting on the Tongass

includes sending seeds to a contract tree nursery down South, coordinating the return of the seedlings to Petersburg and then on to the planting sites, while keeping the trees sorted by seed lot and at the appropriate temperature prior to planting. R.D. Parks was instrumental in getting the trees grown for this study. The actual planting of trees was physically challenging and all involved

put in long days of moving, planting and marking trees. Each and every tree was marked with a flag and a numbered tag that will allow that specific tree and its genetic source (seedlot) to be tracked and allow for monitoring through the years. Tree planters on Prince of Wales included Gary Lawton, Pat Tierney, Scott McDonald, Billy Steele, Britta Schroeder, Paul Hennon, Carol

McKenzie, Sheila Spores and Chris Scott.

With an expected good survival rate, this study will allow scientists to test which yellow-cedar seed lots are best adapted to regenerate successfully by measuring differences in freezing resistance, growth rates and foliar terpene levels, allowing an increase in our knowledge for this important species.

John Muir Gets a Facelift

Stories and photos by Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District

John Muir gets a facelift...cabin that is. We know from John Muir's diaries and letters that while in California he built a one-room cabin of pine and cedar in his beloved Yosemite. He diverted part of Yosemite Creek to run beneath the cabin floor as he loved the sound of water. Plants grew through the floor boards, and he described frogs chirping beneath. He even wove the threads of two ferns to form what he called "an ornamental arch" over his writing desk.

In 1980, volunteers, in cooperation with the Forest Service, con-

structed John Muir Cabin at about 1,800 foot elevation in Juneau's Spaulding Meadows. The cabin was named after John Muir to commemorate his visit of a hundred year's prior to the Gastineau Channel area. The cabin also commemorates the founding of Juneau in 1880. When conditions allow, you can enjoy views of both downtown Juneau and Gastineau Channel from the cabin.

John Muir Cabin is accessible from the Juneau road system and is rented more than 200 nights a year. Spaulding Meadows is a popular destination year around, but particularly in the winter because of the extensive cross country skiing options one can enjoy in the vicinity of the cabin. The cabin is also popular for day hikers stopping in to warm up after ascending the cabin's primary access route, the three-mile Auke Nu Trail.

Due to tough winter conditions and heavy use by renters, the cabin was in need of renovations. Thanks to Recreation Site Improvement dollars, John Muir Cabin now has a new roof, spiral staircase, enclosed loft, new accessible outhouse and vault, an



New accessible outhouse

accessible ramp to the cabin, and an improved trail between buildings.

Developed Recreation's Cabin Maintenance Leader Rob Morgenthaller led this summer's renovation effort, and many others chipped in and contributed to the project's success. Cabin crew members Jesse Donner and Max Stanley were key helpers, but many thanks also go to Matt Adams, Dillon Barousse, Christy Bullard, Sarah Harwell, Zach Holder, Taylor Murph, Marc Scholten, Steve Stoddard, Seth Stransky, and Matt Thompson.

There are no streams or frogs under Juneau's John Muir Cabin, and you won't find plants growing through the floorboards. However, you might like to rent the cabin, read one of Muir's books within, and look down upon the views he enjoyed over a hundred years ago.



*Rob Morgenthaller, Cabins Specialist, leans on the new spiral staircase.
Photo by Ed Grossman.*

Aleutian Terns: Migration Mystery

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



Susan Oehlers releases a banded Aleutian Tern. Photo by William Richards.

This summer, Forest Service biologists, in collaboration with the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), the University of Hawaii, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), continued research on Aleutian terns on the Yakutat Ranger District. Besides limited colony counts, very little is known about the breeding ecology of this species, and essentially nothing is known about their winter distribution, except anecdotal observations of the species in Southeast Asia during the non-breeding season. The prevalence of the Avian Influenza (H5N1) in Southeast Asia, coupled with potential impacts of human disturbance, are potential threats to Aleutian Terns. This species is designated as a species of concern by several agencies and NGOs, including ADF&G, Audubon Alaska, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and The North American Waterbird Conservation

Plan, as well as a Forest Service Sensitive Species, primarily due to suspected population declines throughout their range.

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. In part because of the large population of Aleutian Terns found there, Black

Sand Spit was recently named as an Audubon Important Bird Area (see article in *SourDough Notes* Winter 2008 Issue).

In 2007, Forest Service biologists worked collaboratively with ADF&G, USFWS, City and Borough of Yakutat, Audubon Alaska, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, and UAS 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. Yakutat Ranger District Fisheries Biologist Nate Catterson, has been tackling this priority in his master's work through UAS (see *SourDough Notes* Winter 2009 Issue).

The second highest priority determined by the working group was to identify the tern's migration pathway and timing. Consequently, the

focus of the 2010 season was to deploy tracking devices called archival light loggers, or "geolocators," on the terns, with continued financial support provided by USFS, UAS, and the ADF&G non-game grant program. Weighing as little as one gram, geolocators work by archiving data about day length that can be used to interpolate a physical location on the earth's surface.



A bird in hand: an Aleutian tern fitted with a unique identification band, a color band, and a geolocator. Photo by Susan Oehlers.

A tiny sensor records light levels every couple of minutes. As every Alaskan knows, day length varies with latitude. Length of day can also be used to calculate solar noon. An internal clock records the time of solar noon, which, when compared with Greenwich Mean Time, can be used to estimate longitude; a calculation first employed by British mariners over a hundred years ago. Using mesh wire boxes with trap doors placed over nests, and the trapping expertise of Dr. David Duffy from the University of Hawaii, we captured 47 terns on Black Sand Spit.

We also investigated smaller colonies in the Yakutat area, and were successful at capturing 66 terns from the colony located near the Italo River. Although geolocators have been used on other tern species, this was the first deployment of geolocators on Aleutian terns. There are many challenges associated with geolocators; primarily that the individual bird has to be re-captured to obtain the data. By recovering even a few birds, however, we will obtain a much greater understanding of this species, and bring us one step closer to identifying the reasons for their decline. We will attempt to retrieve the data during the next two seasons; stay tuned.

Dave Duffy and Susan Oehlers band an Aleutian tern. Photo by William Richards.



Prince of Wales Island's New Scenic Byway

By Marie Messing, Region Transportation Engineer

The Prince of Wales Island Road System includes 1,500 miles of paved and gravel roads with multiple jurisdictions (State Highway, Forest Service Roads and Community Roads). On May 28, 2010, the Organized Village of Kasaan (OVK) in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AK DOT-PF) State Scenic Byways Department and other stakeholders, successfully nominated 260 miles of the total island road system as Scenic Byways. The selected road system contained miles recognized as through "spectacular scenery, abundant wildlife, natural attributes and rich history and culture" on the island.

On August 5, 2010, over 200 local residents and special guests attended the formal Scenic Byway designation and ribbon cutting ceremony in Klawock, Alaska.

Ten communities are connected by the Prince of Wales Island Road System through National Forest System lands. During the ceremony, several members of the island communities, local tribes, Native corporations and

local businesses thanked OVK, AK DOT, the Forest Service and other supporters for their work on the designation. Gary Davis, Assistant Commissioner AK DOT-pf represented the governor at the event.



Craig District Ranger Greg Killinger and Thorne Bay District Ranger Jason Anderson unveil the new Scenic Byway sign on POW Island. Photo by Marcheta Moulton.

The road was closed at the intersection of the Klawock-Hollis Highway while Richard A. Smith, Sr., Tribal President Klawock Cooperative Association; Sam Thomas, OVK Transportation & Infrastructure Specialist; and Marcheta Moulton, State Scenic Byways Coordinator, assisted in cutting the ribbon. Craig District Ranger Greg Killinger and Thorne Bay District Ranger Jason Anderson had the honor of holding each end of the ribbon and unveiling Scenic Byway signs as part of the ceremony.

Once designated, a Scenic Byway is eligible for grant funding to enhance and promote the byway's special qualities. The routes also become eligible to apply for national designations.

For more on the Scenic Byway program, visit the Alaska DOT-PF website at: <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwd-plng/scenic/index.shtml>



A Summer in Alaska

A Unique Experience for a Latin American Biologist

By Carlos Ruiz, Biologist, Volunteer, Cordova Ranger District

After two days and thousands of miles of travel, I arrived in Cordova, Alaska, from Colombia in April 2010. It was just weeks before the shorebirds that winter in my country make that same journey.

I came to volunteer on the Cordova Ranger District as part of CRIMBI (Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative) and the USFS diversity program. I am a wildlife biologist who works in a non profit, nongovernmental organization called Calidris. Over the last 20 years, this organization has worked on bird conservation and research in Colombia. In the last five years, Calidris has joined CRIMBI as a partner of the Forest Service.

I was first struck by the friendliness of the people of Cordova. Cordova people are very kind and the most important thing: they say hello without knowing who you are. That is very good; I really like it.

In early May we celebrated the Shorebird Festival in Cordova. People came to Cordova to see the spectacular migration phenomenon of shorebirds. I had already seen some impressive pictures of thousands of shorebirds in Alaska and I really wanted to watch these huge flocks. On a sunny afternoon, we went to the Copper River Delta and there I had the chance to watch thousands and thousands of Dunlins and Western Sandpipers in the mudflats. These shorebirds were preening and resting during the rising tide. Some shorebirds

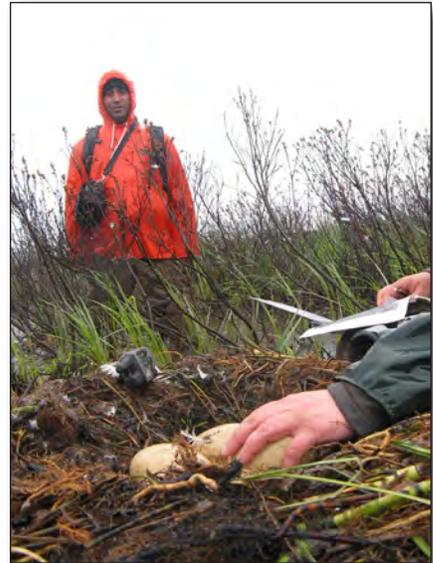
flocks were flying in the distance and looked like an amazing bee swarm. I will never forget that day.

My first task as a volunteer was to participate in shorebird education during the festival. I really enjoyed it because I have studied shorebirds for seven years and have also participated in education in my home country.

During the festival, I presented a Spanish shorebird field trip for the Latin American community as well as a slide presentation on Colombia.

Things got very busy in May and June. After the Shorebird Festival was done we started dusky Canada goose nest searches. It is an admirable work on a sensitive bird but it is really a tough job. We were in the Copper River Delta during several rainy days, walking swampy areas, marsh, bogs, snow and ponds. I may have not been in shape in the beginning but was strong by the end.

Other projects I worked on included rusty blackbirds and song birds. I was able to use previous experience as I watched new birds species and learned about songs and behavior of songbirds.



Carlos Ruiz at a dusky Canada goose nest on the Copper River Delta. Photo by Cori Indelicato.

I love birds, but shorebirds are my favorite group, and one thing I really desired to do in Alaska was to see the nests, eggs and chicks of migratory shorebirds that winter in Colombia. I have captured and banded migratory shorebirds in my country for years and I wanted to know another side of the story of these birds: the breeding season. Richard Lanctot, a well-known scientist of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a CRIMBI partner, invited me to go to Barrow on the North Slope. There I worked in the tundra looking for shorebirds nests and capturing and banding those birds. It was a pretty spectacular experience. Shorebirds chicks are so cute.

I really have enjoyed this summer in Alaska so far; I have met some very



Carlos Ruiz teaches Mt. Eccles elementary students about shorebird migration. Photo by Kim Kiml.

interesting people, and learned about Alaska wildlife. For the first time I saw moose, bears, coyotes and paddled kayaks and poke boats. I look forward to going to Yakutat, Wrangell and Girdwood to participate in other Forest Service programs before the summer is over.

I will take many of the things I learned in Alaska back to Colombia. One of the biggest learning opportunities was seeing how different Federal, State and private entities work together for conservation. Many of the surveys, monitoring efforts, habitat work and education can also be used to help expand and improve our program in Colombia. But the relationships that I have made with many people in bird conservation will be one of the most important things I bring back home.

Finally I want to say, *Muchas gracias* to CRIMBI, the Forest Service, and especially Erin Cooper for having the great idea to foster a connection between CRIMBI, the Copper River Delta and Latin America through a biologist exchange program. I hope more people from other countries have this chance. Now I can say I have survived in the Last Frontier.

Yakutat Students Have Gone to the Birds

By Susan Oehlers, Wildlife Biologist, and Nathaniel Catterson, Fisheries Biologist, Yakutat RD

This year, with support of the Copper River International Migratory Bird Initiative (CRIMBI) and Forest Service Wildlife Interpretation and Education funds, the Yakutat Ranger District conducted student school birding programs. Our goal was to increase the student's understanding of and appreciation for migratory birds in order to help foster community involvement and public support for achieving conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. Although we have done some student birding trips over the last couple of years, additional funding this year allowed for a richer experience with the purchase of additional binoculars and field guides and more one-on-one time with the students.

We centered our activities during the elementary and high schools "Outdoor Week" and "Sea Week" during May, and the summer school program during June and July. In May, students were introduced to the importance of birds, the international connections of Yakutat area birds, and conservation issues, before learning the basics of birding, including guidelines for responsible viewing and the potential for ecotourism, and trying out their new skills on birding field trips.

Fortunately, the theme of the summer school program was birds. Students participated in indoor bird related activities as well as birding field trips to different areas and habitats where they honed their birding skills, including the use of field guides, binoculars, and spotting scopes. In conjunction with the National Park Service, students completed the "Junior Birder Program," which teaches students about responsible birding and bird conservation, culminating in earning a "Junior Birder" patch. The summer school program wrapped up with a beach picnic where various prizes and the "Junior Birder" patches were awarded, as well as a summer school newsletter focused on birds.

We reached about 90 students (most of the Yakutat elementary and high school students) through this program, and all activities were well received by school staff and students. We hope that this program brought about a greater understanding of the importance of our local natural resources and the international connections, and that students will be instilled with a greater sense of appreciation for and stewardship of these natural resources. By educating students, the message will extend to their families and friends. And, oh yeah, we hoped they learned that birding is fun; bird on.



Students take turns honing in on birds with spotting scopes.

National Get Outdoors Day

Mural Making and More with Environmental Artist Wyland

By Sara Boario, Chugach National Forest, Amanda Smith, Alaska Geographic and Kelly Meeker, Anchorage Park Foundation



Left: Anne Zimmerman, Director, Wildlife Fish and Rare Plants, Washington Office; Wyland, Artist; Gloria Manning, Associate Deputy Chief; Sammy Salmon with unidentified child, Randy Ruaro, Governor’s Office; Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester, and Dan Sullivan, Mayor of Anchorage. Right: Two young artists join artist Wyland in creating a mural at National Get Outdoors Day

On June 12, marine life artist Wyland led Anchorage youth in an artistic exploration of the connection between the health and sustainability of our water resources, public lands, and communities. The event was open to the public, and celebrated National Get Outdoors Day with on-site mural making, painting, music and other activities. More than 200 youth and family members took part, joined by Regional Forester Beth Pendleton, Associate Deputy Chief Gloria Manning, Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan and other local and state officials.

To help kick-off the event, “advance artistic teams” of Anchorage youth were prepared for the celebration by staff from the Anchorage School District, Alaska Geographic, Anchorage Park Foundation, and Chugach National Forest. School art classes contemplated mural design, landscape themes, and prepared sketches. Students then transformed their

- Event Partners**
- * U.S. Forest Service
 - * NOAA
 - * Alaska State Parks
 - * Alaska Geographic
 - * Anchorage Park Foundation
 - * Anchorage Community Land Trust
 - * Credit Union 1
 - * Alaska Teen Media Institute

concepts into murals live at the event. Completed murals are currently being displayed throughout the community, including at the Alaska Railroad and the Credit Union 1 branch in Mountain View.



Finished mural

Wyland is well known to Alaskans for his “Whaling Wall” on J.C. Penney’s downtown Anchorage store. He returned as part of the nationwide FOCUS (Forests, Oceans, Climate, and Us) campaign in partnership with the Forest Service and NOAA.

FOCUS uses art and science to teach young people about our forests and ocean—and how these two irreplaceable resources hold the key to the future of our water supplies, climate, and global health. Some murals from the Alaska event may possibly be exchanged with other Wyland FOCUS projects in Puerto Rico and Maryland.

In Anchorage, the opportunities for learning and building connections between children and nature start in our city and state parks and flow to the Chugach National Forest, now a Children’s Forest. The event helped kick-off a packed summer season of activities for youth and their families across all public lands.

Stikine River Bird Festival

By David Butler, District Interpreter, Wrangell Ranger District

I've only been in the Alaska Region for a short time, but during this time I learned that Alaska is definitely "For the Birds." Between the Hummingbird Festival in Ketchikan, the well-known Cordova Shorebird Festival, and Wrangell's own Stikine River Birding Festival (formerly known as the Garnet Festival), there is no shortage of opportunities to celebrate our feathered friends in Alaska.

Located on the Pacific Flyway, we enjoy the unique opportunity to view and appreciate millions of migratory birds close up as they make their incredible journey north for the summer. Here in Wrangell, we are situated just south of the mouth of the Stikine River in the center of the Alexander Archipelago. From here, it is just a quick jet boat ride to the mudflats along the Stikine River Delta where one can view flocks of thousands of shorebirds. These abundant aerialists may be the main attraction for many visitors, but they are not the only birds that grace the skies around the Stikine during this time. Sandhill cranes, snow geese, various waterfowl, and, of course, bald eagles can all be found in great numbers here during spring migration.

The second annual Stikine River Birding Festival was held April 27 through May 2 with great success. The U.S. Forest Service, the City of Wrangell, and local businesses all sponsored events. The festival was started thirteen years ago as the Garnet Festival, referring to the Garnets that are mined by the local Boy Scout troop from the Garnet Ledge on the Stikine River, and sold to visitors at the city docks. We decided to rename the festival a couple of years ago in order to emphasize the unique bird watching opportunities we have for locals and visitors alike.

For this year's festival we were fortunate to have artist Evon Zerbetz from Ketchikan for an entire week of art activities leading up to her keynote presentation on the evening of May 1. Zerbetz is best known for her work that focuses on that infamous avian trickster the raven. She was the illustrator for the children's book *Ten Rowdy Ravens*, and creator of the traveling art exhibit "Raucous: Everything Raven" inspired by her artwork in the book. Evon, with assistance from interpreter Maddie Smith conducted art classes for the students in the Wrangell School District. The children's artwork was then put on display along with pieces from Evon's "Raucous Raven" at the Nolan Center (Wrangell's state of the art Civic Center/Museum) for all to see.

Other festival events included Story Time at Chief Shakes Tribal House where Marge Bird (a Tlingit elder) told the Raven creation story to a group of toddlers and



Wrangell District Interpreter David Butler helps in construction of a birdhouse during the Stikine River Bird Festival. Photo by Maddie Smith.

their parents. Also, representatives from the Irene Ingle Public library read children's books to the same audience. Saturday morning took flight with Breakfast with the Birds, local author and birder Bonnie Demerjian lead a morning bird walk at the scenic Muskeg Meadows Golf Course.

Later that afternoon, I joined Wrangell Ranger District employees David Rak and Maddie Smith to help members of the community and their kids build birdhouses for the Chestnut-backed Chickadee during the Critter Craft activity hour. The activity was a huge success with a total of 28 birdhouses built in one hour. Various other community events included the Ducks Unlimited Banquet and Silent Auction on Saturday evening.

The festival soared to great heights during Evon Zerbetz's keynote presentation. It was a delightful balance of art and science. Evon showed examples of her "raven-centric" art work and shared the stories that inspired her work. The presentation concluded with a book signing by Evon that gave festival attendees a chance to have a few moments with the acclaimed artist.

The Stikine River Birding Festival may be in its infancy when compared to other bird festivals in the region. However, the amazing bird watching opportunities, family fun, and Wrangell's famous hospitality are second to none.

Downpours Dampen Petersburg Get Outdoors Day Festivities But Can't Extinguish Outdoor Enthusiasm

Story and photos by Julie Speegle, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Tongass National Forest

After weeks of unusually beautiful, sunny weather, National Get Outdoors Day dawned with a not-so-promising forecast in Petersburg, Alaska—windy, rainy and cooler.

That didn't stop nearly 60 people from participating in the Petersburg Ranger District's National GO Day event, which included a picnic and

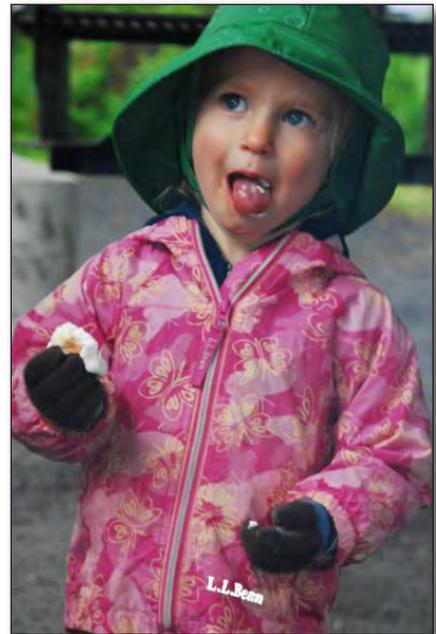
ribbon-cutting at the recently completed Blind Slough Picnic Area. Some visitors who attended were from as far away as New Jersey and Indiana.

"We went on the plant and bird nature walk at Blind River Rapids this morning," said Indianapolis resident Alice Craig, who was visiting Petersburg with her husband Jay Craig. "We both love photography, so we thought we'd get some tips on the nature photography hike this afternoon."

PRD staff had planned many outdoor activities for the day, including fly casting demonstrations, biking, hiking, and a Junior Ranger Program. One of the most popular activities was the free, one-hour paddle trip up Blind Slough offered by Tongass Kayak Adventures.

"I love the quietness and calm of the water," said Nicole Goldsmith, a zoo science college student visiting Petersburg from New Jersey. Goldsmith had visited Southeast Alaska four years ago on a cruise, and had always wanted to come back. This was her second time kayaking.

With intermittent periods of rain throughout the day, many attendees



Gabriele Whitacre, 2, tries a toasted marshmallow at Blind Slough Picnic Area near Petersburg, Alaska.



Freya Tucker, 2, doesn't let rain dampen her enthusiasm for National Get Outdoors Day.



The newly renovated Blind Slough Picnic Area near Petersburg, Alaska, was first constructed in the 1980s. A \$950K renovation began in the fall of 2008.

stayed warm and dry around the campfire built under the roof of one of the new pavilions. Some roasted marshmallows.

To others, rain did little to dampen their enthusiasm for being outdoors. Little ones stomped and splashed around in the puddles with their rubber boots, teenagers followed Petersburg tradition by jumping off the bridge into Blind Slough, while others played Frisbee with their dogs.

Most activities were based from Blind Slough Picnic Area, just 18 miles outside of Petersburg. The facility was first built in the early 1980s. It was closed in the fall of 2008 for a \$950K renovation project that added three new pavilions and two new paved parking lots for vehicles and buses. The pavilions were made out of Alaskan yellow cedar from Icy Straits Milling and Lumber, Inc., in Hoonah. Also added were two new fishing piers that

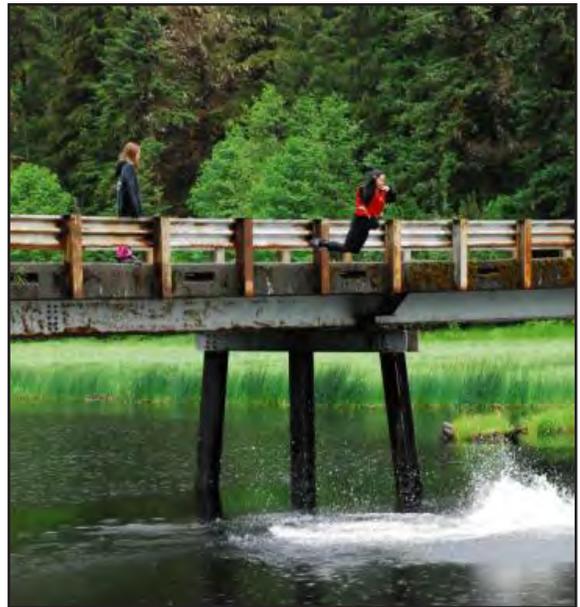
are ADA compliant. The entire facility is now fully accessible.

The Blind Slough Picnic Area was reopened this spring, and Get Outdoors Day offered a great opportunity to celebrate the completion of the popular recreation spot with a picnic and ribbon-cutting.

Since the Blind Slough area has long been a place of gathering for outdoor fun, and with the renovation representing a future of outdoor recreation opportunities designed to get kids outdoors and into the woods, PRD staff thought it would be fitting for children to be the honorees to actually cut the ribbon.

After a short speech by Petersburg District Ranger Chris Savage, three children stepped up to the red ribbon, scissors in hands. The sounds of “snip, snip” could be heard as Iris Case, 3, Isiah Slaven, 7, and Liam Demko, 7, each cut through their section of ribbon, symbolizing the opening of Blind Slough Picnic Area to children of all ages.

“That was fun,” the children chorused. And after all, isn’t that what it’s all about?



Teenagers follow Petersburg tradition by jumping off the bridge into Blind Slough.

Family Fishing Day in Yakutat

By Jason Stancil, Recreation Technician, Yakutat Ranger District



Left: Sammy Salmon makes a guest appearance at Family Fishing Day in Yakutat.

Right: A young girl makes her own T-shirt.



The Yakutat small boat harbor was a busy place July 24. Over 60 kids showed up with their families for the Yakutat Ranger District’s annual Family Fishing Day. Kids and adults alike tried their hand at tying flies for the upcoming Coho season, and enjoyed the always popular T-shirt making booth, where, with painted hands and rubber stamps, they created shirts they could take home. Out on the docks,

kids fished for fish of all types with the provided fishing poles and life vests. “Lunch” seemed to be an ongoing event, and guest appearances by Sammy Salmon and Smokey were a big hit as always. Other activities included a casting competition and a fishing themed obstacle course. A good time was had by everyone and all of the children walked away with a goodie bag.

Family Fishing Day promotes

recreational catch-and-release fishing and outdoor activity as a healthy and fun way for families to interact with public lands and the fisheries of the Yakutat area. Leave No Trace items in the goodie bags further spread our message of responsible use of the land and water. Family Fishing Day was organized by the Forest Service but would not be possible without the support by the community. This year was our biggest turn out yet and we can’t wait to see everyone again next year.

Cordova Ranger District Movie Stars

By Ken Hodges, Fisheries Biologist, Cordova Ranger District

When the Cordova 7th grade science class investigated “The Mystery of Odiak Pond,” their Cordova Ranger District helpers didn’t plan on becoming movie stars.

The students wrapped up a year of studying the ecology and history of Odiak Pond by producing a mini-film festival of seven videos. The instructors and students had been documenting the studies with video cameras over the course of the year. This footage, along with graphics and new action to round out the story lines, were edited together to make the students’ videos. Opening night at the Forest Service meeting room didn’t have limousines pulling up to the front door, but there were pickups and plenty of proud parents and students.

One video traced the history of the pond from a free-flowing tidal

slough and wetland to the shrunken, filled, and culverted pond it is now. Other videos documented the water quality tests and fish sampling taken over the course of the school year. The final videos summed up the threats to the pond from street runoff and other pollutants.

Forest Service GIS specialist Samantha Greenwood helped the students with historic and current aerial photographs so they could track the changes to the pond and the development of the city around it. Fisheries technicians Brian Neilson and Sean Meade went out on multiple field trips leading the fish trapping and bug sampling efforts, testing the water, and helping the students map the bathymetry (depth) of the pond.

Maybe they’re not real movie stars, but Meade and Neilson got

several cameo appearances, and along with Greenwood, got their names prominently displayed in the credits with big thank-you’s. Who needs to be a star when you have fans like this?

So what’s the big “Mystery of Odiak Pond?”

Science teacher Cara Heitz explained, “The older residents said they remembered the time when salmon used to spawn in the small creeks that ran through town and into the slough.” Now that the creeks have been diverted or paved over, no one knew if there were any salmon left.

The fish trapping showed that there are juvenile coho salmon in the pond, and the discovery of an adult carcass



Fisheries technician Brian Neilson (wearing the striped hat) assists the students with the water quality tests in Odiak Pond. Photo by Kate Alexander.



A cold winter day doesn’t stop the students from taking water samples from under the ice, conducting the chemical tests, and recording the data. Photo by Kate Alexander.

in the fall showed at least a few fish return. Kate Alexander, project coordinator with the Copper River Watershed Project, said the students are now nominating Odiak Pond to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Anadromous Waters catalog. Designating the pond as salmon habitat will help to protect the pond from the effects of development or other threats in the future.

Alexander stressed that the take-home message of the project is “Remembering that salmon live here—how can we make sure that we are living as ‘salmon friendly’ neighbors in this watershed?” The students and the Copper River Watershed Project are now thinking of ways to restore the pond and perhaps improve fish access through the culverts. Maybe someday Cordova residents will see salmon spawning in the city streams again.

Coho in the Classroom and Beyond

By Brandy Prefontaine, Hydrological Fisheries Biological Technician, Thorne Bay Ranger District

This spring, middle school students from the Southeast Island School District at the Naukati School Site worked with the Thorne Bay Ranger District, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and Prince of Wales Hatchery Association to investigate and understand their karst watersheds and local Coho salmon populations. Students explored the salmon life cycle, fish habitat, and water quality as they raised adopted Coho salmon fry and engaged in classroom activities, discussions, and field trips. The project information and observations were a perfect complement for their district science fair project, "Be Water and Energy Wise," which gained them the Island-Wide Science Fair Grand Champion Award.

The adventure started with a field trip by the Naukati Middle and Elementary Schools in February to the Klawock Lake Hatchery. There, students picked out Coho eggs and brought them to their new home in Naukati, a special complex-cooled recirculation aquarium where they would live for four months. The students, who were committed to hatching healthy fry, were required to follow the carefully crafted study plan and permit created by Thorne Bay Ranger District Biological Science Technician Brandy Prefontaine and Naukati Middle School Teacher Kimberly Hoover.

The students monitored light, temperature, and water quality to provide the optimal conditions in the



Naukati School teacher Kimberly Hoover and Thorne Bay Hydrological Fisheries Bio Tech Brandy Prefontaine join their students in front of the classroom aquarium. Photo by Vanessa Richter.



An aquarium that holds salmon eggs generates a lot of excitement at the Naukati School site.

aquarium. They took turns weekly recording and graphing the pH, nitrate, nitrite, ammonium, water temperature, thermal units, as well as checking for mortalities. A series of ooo's and ahh's were added to the strong sense of excitement and accomplishment that filled the air when the first eggs hatched out. The students called their parents and other community members in to come celebrate their achievement and talk about the incubation process and impacts from varying management

activities on spawning, migration, and rearing habitat.

Students participated in additional field trips that reinforced the concepts they learned during the semester. They attended the Craig Community Association Earth Day Celebration where they learned about reducing, reusing, and recycling to protect their watersheds. They entered a "Fashion Trashion" show, and reviewed the high school display on bio-fuels project for ideas that could make a difference to the environment. They also participated in a community trash clean up day and learned firsthand how our actions on the landscape can affect watershed health.

The Naukati students joined students from Craig Middle School at the Eagle's Nest Campground to spend the day learning about aquatic invertebrates and water quality. They also had a fly tying class and fly fishing lesson.

The final field trip was bittersweet. At Klawock Lake, assisted by John Brunes and Dan Goodness from the Klawock Hatchery, the students measured and weighed their fry, and then with happy tears, released them to the lake.

Thanks to teacher Kimberly Hoover, the students, parents, and the community members who devoted extra time and effort to learn about their karst watersheds, water quality, and fish populations. Good things are happening on Prince of Wales Island.

Greetings from the Glacier

By Laurie Craig, Interpreter, Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center

“Isn’t it sad?” the woman said as she looked out at the blue ice. “You must be depressed watching this happen.”

We were talking about the multiple blue slices of ice on the glacier’s terminus. I had just explained the drama of yesterday’s big calvings and our visitor was responding to the news of the rapid retreat of the Mendenhall Glacier. Several of the staff had witnessed Saturday’s 5:20 p.m. and 7:05 p.m. events. They were noisy thundering plunges of ice slabs into the lake.

The visitor’s question made me think about how I feel when I see the Mendenhall calve.

Like many locals, when the glacier calves I am buoyant and blue, just like the ice. For the ice it is physical. For Juneauites it is emotional.

When a calving occurs an iceberg is born. A buoyant piece of the glacier floats off across the lake with a new life independent of its 13-mile source. The new berg and the corresponding gash where it broke off



Calving ice at Mendenhall Glacier

mere sight of the rare and fantastic opportunity to see the ice shear off, splash into the lake and bob slowly to the surface. At the same time we are blue with the unsettling knowledge that our beloved glacier is disappearing before our eyes.

I told the woman I felt a mixture of emotions. I recalled my first view of the landscape; the forest did not exist as we see it today. When the glacier was closer the forest was just twiggy little shrubs poking out of barren gravel. Now we have tall cottonwood trees where bears snooze and porcupines nibble.

We have thickets where songbirds fill the branches with their enchanting songs and bright yellow feathers.

If we live long enough, observing the landscape’s change is inevitable. But being at the glacier all the time has given me a new sense of geologic time and glacial speed: both are more rapid than I would

have guessed. All over the world, “before” and “after” photographs of glaciers capture the attention of viewers. The years separating views are not as long as one would expect for such great change.

The most common request visitors make is to see photos of the glacier’s appearance over time. We do not have the photos we’d like to display. Instead, I use landscape features to explain the march of the ice: when it was at the waterfall; when we could walk beside the eastern terminus; when the ice was off Photo Point; when the glacier’s drainage raged down the gully below the visitor center; when it covered the rock where the visitor center now stands; when the hydroelectric plant—with its foundations hidden in today’s mossy woods—was built to harness the falls’ water into turbines.

These are all milestones in the life of the glacier. Like the pencil lines measuring children’s heights carefully notched on a family’s kitchen



Steep Creek beaver

are both brilliantly blue for awhile until the air begins to break down the dense ice into little fractures that scatter the light and make the ice appear white.

For we who live here the reaction is internal. We know that we belong to this glacier just as it belongs to us. We feel buoyed and excited at the

door frame, these marks create and hold memories.

In the absence of one feature, our focus shifts to another. Just as the forest replaces the ice, we build an attachment to the observable versus the ephemeral. This spring we have had to replace our normal frequent bear sightings with other wildlife. Bears are very scarce (and I miss them), but porcupines, beavers and birds are abundant. Lately, a baby porcupine has been nibbling cottonwood leaves along the Steep Creek Trail. Its mother seems to favor the tree above the “beaver” interpretive sign. Lately we have been able to locate youngster, mother or other adults near that area. At 5 p.m., the beavers emerge to swim in ponds nearby, gnaw alders and willows and paddle around the ponds dragging leafy boughs. Last night I heard what sounded like a small dog’s muffled bark coming from the kettle pond by the visitor center’s concrete stairs. Checking closer, I found an annoyed mother merganser leading her brood of ducklings across the pond while a beaver swam slow-



Merganser family

ly after them. The sound had been the mother merganser’s defensive call apparently. One of her spotted chicks rode on her back while the other eight or nine paddled their tiny legs at high speed trailing their mother like the tail of a kite. (Beavers are vegetarians and don’t eat little ducks.)

A unique wildlife visitor dropped by last week. A harbor seal came into the shallow clear water of Steep Creek’s mouth to check out the creek for salmon. Another seal sighting occurred two days later. The unusual aspect is the timing: each year we see one or two seals make the long five-mile swim from their normal oceanic habitat but that is when the coho

salmon are spawning. We have not seen the first sockeye yet. We wonder what that indicates.

The baby ravens have not fledged yet, but I expect the raucous youngsters any day to venture toward the parking lots where we will watch them harass their tormented parents. I can hear the birds’ calls in the woods but I do not

think the raven chicks have left their nest yet. Arctic tern babies are strutting around the Photo Point rookery wearing a combination of downy speckled feathers and slick white plumage as they transition into sleek replicas of their parents.

As I think back to the woman’s question about whether the disappearing glacier makes me sad, I realize the answer is never easy. We have to let go of some things we love and embrace other new things. We just need to have the wisdom to decide what to relinquish and what to regale. But isn’t that the challenge of every change?

Cheers,

Laurie

Lassie in AK

This photo, now housed in the Regional Office, was taken in 1968 during the filming of the “Last Frontier” television episode of the long running *Lassie* series. In the show, Lassie helps save a hunter and his partner who are mauled by a bear and wander wounded in the forest.

The men in the photo are not identified. We don’t know if they were actors, or Forest Service employees. If you know, will you please send an email to the editor at taugh@fs.fed.us? We will publish the information in the Fall issue of *SourDough Notes*.



Busy Summer at Begich, Boggs, Visitor Center

By Julie Buehler, Glacier Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

After an eventful winter of weekend visitation, the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center (BBVC) is up and running for the summer season. Visitation has been holding steady this summer, at times feeling much busier than last, although final counts are not in as of yet. The staff has been enthusiastically offering guided hikes, fresh new programs, and a variety of narrations on local partnerships.

In addition to the regular schedule, the BBVC has also kept busy offering special events throughout the summer. This summer kicked off with a successful Kids Fishing Day and a Celebration of National Trails Day. Local families and visitors enjoyed fun family activities and free admission to the visitor center. During the month of June, award-winning author Libby Hatton offered a book signing for her new publication *Wonder Bird* that tells a story of an Arctic Tern and her discovery of migration and the world around her.

Several members of the BBVC team once again contributed to the Girdwood Forest Fair. Cassie Bauer, Kathleen Keusenkothen, Jeremy Catron, William Parry and I all assisted in the construction and mobilization of what, quite possibly, may have been the best parade float ever. (And we don't just say that every year.) Smokey Bear also made the mandatory appearance to be sure smiles were on every child's face. The theme of this year's parade was "Pirates of the Midnight Sun" and Girdwood Ranger District employees and their families donned their best pirate garb and strutted their stuff.



Left to right: Two visitors join Forest Service employees Jeremy Catron, Cassie Bauer, Smokey Bear, and William Parry at the float constructed for the Girdwood Forest Fair. Photo by Kathleen Keusenkothen.



Begich, Boggs Visitor Center by Tom Iraci.

Another exciting event this summer was the 5th annual Celebration of Culture and Art on July 18. This year's focus was on fiber arts and included the Girdwood Gold Stitchers quilting group. The Gold Stitchers displayed a wide variety of homemade quilts in the Portage Valley Learning Center. In addition, several shorebird quilts made by Cordova elementary students were also featured at the event. Visitors to the event enjoyed viewing the quilts and making their very own quilt post card made from Alaskan-themed fabric.

As August rolled in, the BBVC debuted a live fish viewing camera in the main lobby as part of a new fish exhibit. Visitors watched live footage of the salmon in Portage Valley spawning at the Williwaw fish viewing platform. Interpreters at the center also offered salmon programs and information at the fish viewing platform.

In addition to all the special events, we have had hundreds of youth groups come and visit the center to learn about the glaciers, wildlife and the ecology of the Chugach National Forest. I think most will agree; there is no better classroom than this beautiful landscape.

The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center will remain open and offer programs through September 26. It has been a very successful summer with lots of visitation and exciting programming. If you find yourself in the area, stop by and say, "hello."

Recycling Containers at Petersburg Ranger District

Carin Christensen, Developed Recreation/Conservation Education Lead, Petersburg Ranger District

Visitors to the Mitkof Island recreation sites will now be able to separate their recyclables from their trash. In the summer of 2010, recycling containers were installed at Blind Slough Picnic Area, Blind River Rapids, and Man Made Hole.

In 2009, the Petersburg Ranger District applied for and received a micro-grant from the Tongass Green Team to buy recycling containers for the major recreation sites on the island. The Green Team is comprised of Forest Service employees who work toward sustainable operations on their units, and the request seemed to fit with their mission. The containers had certain requirements: they needed to be durable; resist vandalism by humans and bears; withstand rain; and blend in with the environment. The container we found met all of the conditions, and was made of 35% recycled material.

Past efforts to recycle at these sites were not always successful, and even now the system isn't perfect. Most people are pretty good at separating, but there



Recycling container installed at Blind Slough Picnic area.

Photo by Carin Christensen.

are some who need a little help. Still, because one-third to one-half of the contents in the garbage bins was recyclable material, the district thought it was worth another try.

Honoring our Ancestors through Government Service

By Angelina Lammers, Tribal Government Relations, Tongass National Forest

This June, Hoonah Ranger District Information Receptionist Winona Dick and Regional Office EEO Specialist Teddy Castillo joined me in attending the 2010 Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) Conference at Uncasville, Conn.

At the opening cultural ceremony, we performed a Tlingit thank you ceremony for the Mohegan Tribe. The ceremony is a Tlingit protocol among clans to acknowledge clan ownership of the land and to show appreciation for permission to visit that clan's land. The ceremony was appreciated by attendees and the opening cultural night an excellent opportunity to share our Alaska Native culture.

The 2010 theme was "Between Native America & Government." The conference focus was on providing training education for govern-

ment employees, particularly those involved in the delivery of Native American services and programs to reach their full potential. The training opportunity is open to all federal, state, tribal and local government employees. SAIGE also recruits high school graduates and college students to apply for a scholarship to attend each year's conference. This year, 15 students attended. Along with training, students were able to meet with government employees and agency representatives about career opportunities with the federal government.

Featured speakers were Donald Chapman, Senior Advisor for Native American Affairs to the Secretary of Commerce, and Paul Tsosie, Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs. Walter Echo-Hawk and Stephen Pevar, both experts in Federal Indian Law and Policy, ad-

dressed the conference concerning the trust responsibility, treaty rights and Native land ethic.

SAIGE Mission

To promote the recruitment, retention, development and advancement of American Indian and Alaska Native government employees, and work to ensure their equal treatment under the law; to educate federal agencies in the history and obligations of the Federal Indian Trust Responsibility and to assist them in its implementation; to assist government agencies in the development and delivery of initiatives and programs which honor the unique Federal-Tribal relationship; and to provide a national forum for issues and topics affecting American Indian and Alaska Native government employees.

Bushwhacking in Alaska

Excerpts of story by Steve Reese. Submitted by Alison Rein, Recreation Planner, Glacier Ranger District

There are certain things a person should know about bushwhacking in Alaska. First, up here, “bushwhack” is kind of a cool word to say, a sort of macho thing to claim, as in “I had to bushwhack in five miles....” In Alaska—except by traveling in a boat, an airplane, a vehicle, above tree line, or in a town and on trails—to go anywhere is to bushwhack.

Bushwhacking starts where everything listed above stops. You get out of whatever you’re in, off of whatever you’re on, and walk into the bush. It’s quite often that immediate. Within feet, you can’t see where you just were. Sometimes, you can’t even see your feet.

So, first, the bush is thick. It’s made up of lots of different and interesting plants, too. Alder is the most talked about. It’s a woody shrub, maybe 20 feet tall or so, but built like an interwoven three-dimensional and flexible picket fence. The branches can be as big around as your calf. They tend to grow somewhat horizontally along the ground before growing upward. They all tend to lie facing downhill from months and years of snow load in the winter. They have infinite forks and grow so close together they grow on top of each other. And this is just what alder is like when you stand still. Once you start to move through the stuff, it comes alive. You can find yourself standing on branches and in the air, then on your knees and crawling under, then laid out between, around, and over several branches from several alders at once, trying not to fall into the stream that just appeared under you.



A backpacker is almost hidden in the thick brush.

You rely on the branches you grab to hold you up on one end, and try to stay calm about the branches that will not let you through on the other. If you step down on one branch to get over it, that pulls another branch on top of your other foot. If you’re going uphill, the only thing getting you up is the alder branches you pull yourself up with. If you’re going uphill, the primary difficulty is that you keep wedging yourself into all the forks of all the branches pointing downhill. Sidehill is tough. Any kind of pack is misery—the alders seem to want whatever you have more than you do. They will steal the watch off your arm. When you least expect it, big branches slide from underfoot to spring up and smack you in the jaw. Little branches will poke you in the eye. Legs and arms get woven into the woodwork and won’t come out. The unusual whimpering sounds you sometimes hear in alder groves mean it’s time to stop and take a breath—that’s you. You’re wearing out. There is no such thing as moving in a hurry, or in a straight line as you weave yourself through the maze.

Downhill is best since the alders are already leaning in that direction. While going downhill, a frequent chant is this: “Alders are your friends,” over and over. Why? Because it’s so thick, and so steep, you can’t see the ground beneath your feet. The only thing holding you up is the alder branch in each hand, as you let yourself over the next edge.

Second, bushwhacking is almost always on steep and hidden terrain. Terrain is very much a part of a bushwhack. It’s almost always up, down, or sidehill. Frequently, it’s a need-to-hold-on-to-something up, down, or sidehill. If it’s flat, it’s in water. And scale here is deceptive, so look out. If it looks like it’s only a mile away, it’s not. There are at least two stream crossings and three hidden ridge lines to go up and down before you get to what you can see from here.

Third, since it’s Alaska, a bushwhack is also wet, either because it’s raining right now, it just did rain and the brush is still soaked, or it’s before afternoon and the dew has not dried. So it’s wet, the kind that in thick brush slaps you in the face, and eventually runs down your legs and into your boots, and down the back of your neck to keep you cool while you sweat in your rain gear. Since you can’t see where you’re walking (point #1), it’s steep (point #2), and now it’s wet (point #3), it’s surprisingly slick. When you least expect it, your foot lands on some frictionless something down there: rocks, branches, moss, mud, grass, or anything.



Author Steve Reese appreciates the view from the top

Last but not least, for real joy and madness, add mosquitoes, moose flies, white socks, and no-see-ums for a real branch grabbing, bug slapping, slip-sliding, good time.

Throw in Devil's club, false azalea, head high salmonberry, grasses, ferns, fireweed, spruce, fallen beetle-kill spruce, blueberry, willow, cow parsnip, rock bands, avalanche chutes, mud, distance, exhaustion, being lost, and just a little bit of frustration, you start to have bushwhacking.

So the question becomes, "Why?" Answers include:

- It didn't look that bad before I started.
- It was only a little way across.
- I had no idea.
- It wasn't my idea.
- To get to the other side.

Nobody ever wakes up in the morning and says, "Let's go bushwhack!" If you are with someone who does do this, check them for high fever and suspected hysteria. Protect yourself. However, there may be jobs that require bushwhacking. OK, that might make sense. People all over the world get paid to be miserable. Or maybe, there actually *is* something on the other side of that sea of alder worth getting to. Maybe a mountaintop, a glacier, or a river. In that case, the bushwhack will make the goal that much sweeter.

A Welcoming Change

By Sue Jennings, Recreation Planner, Tongass National Forest

Employees at the Scow Bay Office in Petersburg increased office curb appeal this summer by adding planters and plants to the entrance. The Petersburg Supervisor's Office Landscape Committee (PSOLC) planned and implemented the project. Timber and engineering contributed funds for the supplies and plants. This article is not long enough to list all of the people involved, but I would like to thank them all for making coming to work so much nicer.

The project started with the PSOLC, who spearheaded the efforts to improve the front of the Scow Bay Office. From their plan, Emil Tucker, Bill Tremblay and Ted Sandhofer built cedar-planting boxes for the front of the building with wood donated from the Petersburg Ranger District trails program. The long-lasting cedar-plank boxes were set on either side of the front entrance.

With the planters in place, employees filled the boxes with rocks for drainage, soil, compost, and plants. Employees donated some of the plants from their own gardens. It took several days to get both planters filled. After the planting was completed, a picnic table was moved in for lunches and alfresco meetings.

All of the effort paid off. The plants are thriving in the summer sun and the building is much more welcoming to visitors and employees. Plans are to improve weed infested patches along the PSO parking lot.

Next year – Phase II.



Karen Dillman, John McDonell, and Nicole McMurren haul gravel for drainage



The garden area is thriving with colorful flowers and plants.

Forest Service Approves Green Energy in Stikine-LeConte Wilderness

By David Rak and Bob Dalrymple, Wrangell Ranger District

The Tongass National Forest has authorized the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to use solar panels at their Kakwan Cabin in the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness on the Wrangell Ranger District. The panels were determined to be the “minimum tool” needed at the cabin in the Wilderness. The panels will allow ADF&G crews to use solar energy to replace propane and non-renewable petroleum products for lights and electricity at the cabin.

ADF&G has held a special use permit for the cabin since 1976 to support research and administration of fish and wildlife resources along the Stikine River. The cabin site is now within the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness, designated by Congress in 1980. The Wilderness legislation allows for the cabin’s special use permit and limited use of motorized equipment for fisheries research and management.

In June 2008, the Kakwan Cabin was completely destroyed in a fire. ADF&G asked to install solar panels as part of the cabin replacement. Electricity from the panels will be used to charge batteries to power lights and other electronic devices. A minimum requirements analysis was done for this project since it is within a Wilderness Area. The number, size and location of the solar panels are designed to minimize the impact to the wilder-



Left to right: Gerry Herbrandson (Solar Wind of Alaska), who installed the panels, reviews his work. David Rak (USFS) and Keith Pahlke (ADF&G) shake hands in recognition of the new solar panels at the Kakwan Cabin. Photo by Rod Herbrandson.

ness resource while meeting the minimum electrical power needs for fish and wildlife management work.

In the past, propane and a portable gasoline powered generator were used at the cabin. The solar panels will reduce the use and impacts of these non-renewable fuels within the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness.

Kids Fishing Day 2010

By Brandy Prefontaine, Hydrological Fisheries Biological Technician, Thorne Bay Ranger District

We registered 99 sturdy Alaskan children, ranging in age from one to 15, for Kids’ Fishing Day June 12 on Prince of Wales Island. While it stormed, and a few resident trout were caught, there were also many opportunities to receive instruction in fishing fundamentals, angler ethics, the handling and releasing of fish, boating safety, and fishing regulations. There was a casting contest, fly tying instruction, a “Celebrating Wildflowers Walk” and a colorful fish printing session.

The kids rotated through fun, educational demonstrations given by:



Children learn angler ethics at Kids Fishing Day. Photo by Mike Ausman.

- The University of Alaska Southeast
- Barbara Morgan, University of Alaska Ketchikan Fisheries Technology Department
- Gary Freitag, in partnership with Alaska Marine Advisory Program, NOAA/NMFS and ADF&G Invasive Species Program (on aquatic invasive species).
- POW Hatchery Association.

The new Fun Fish Obstacle Course proved to be a great

(cont’d on pg. 39)

Being Considerate of Scent-Sensitive Co-Workers

By Julie Speegle, Assistant Public Affairs Officer, Tongass National Forest

Recently I was cleaning and disinfecting my work area—something I considered a healthy activity because I was killing germs and ridding my work area of dust. What I didn't realize, is that I was causing a co-worker to feel not-so-healthy.

The smell of the common, anti-bacterial, all-purpose cleaner I was using was causing my office mate not just discomfort, but actual physical ill-effects: headache, nausea, and light-headedness.

Fragrances have long been added to a wide range of products for marketing purposes, from diapers and cleaners to deodorants and hair-sprays. Just a small amount of many of these products can induce an allergic or asthmatic attack in some people, maybe the person sitting in the next cubicle over.

Other symptoms scent-sensitive sufferers may experience include fatigue, weakness, insomnia, loss of appetite, confusion, depression,

numbness, skin irritation, shortness of breath and respiratory affects.

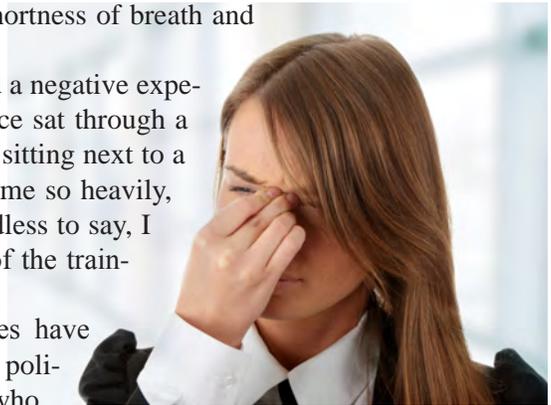
Surely each of us has had a negative experience with fragrances. I once sat through a day-long training workshop sitting next to a woman who wore her perfume so heavily, I could barely breathe. Needless to say, I didn't get the full benefits of the training.

Many schools and offices have instituted "fragrance-free" policies, and have asked those who enter to refrain from using scented products. This is a difficult feat considering the plethora of products that contain fragrances. Even just a few minor changes can help, though.

Remember your workplace is your workplace, not your home. Feel free to use your scented products at home, and refrain from doing so in the workplace.

Here are a few tips:

- Don't wear perfume or aftershave in the workplace—in today's world, it is considered unprofessional. Save these fragranced products for going out to dinner or other non-work related activity.
- Use as many unscented and mildly-scented products as you can (lotions, makeup, laundry detergent, cleaners, etc.).
- If you have a co-worker who wears or uses a product with a scent that causes you discomfort or illness let them know or tell your supervisor.



Kids Fishing Day cont'd

success. Many parents had to pull their children away at the end of the event to go home. Teachers and parents laughed at the miles of smiles from kids who begged to build their own obstacle courses at the school to run through.

Sammy Salmon and Smokey Bear put in appearances while 350 people enjoyed cotton candy and barbecue. We were very thankful to all the families that braved the rain and wind to come out for the event. We appreciated everyone who worked, volunteered, or donated to help provide a positive and encouraging atmosphere to engage our island children to learn and participate in healthy outdoor lifestyles and activities.

Special thanks to our past, present, and future "Spawners" who made the Ducky Race and barbecue possible. This long standing, annual island-wide event is hosted by the Forest Service Thorne Bay and Craig Ranger Districts, UAS Fisheries Department, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, The Prince of Wales Island Hatchery Association, and our wonderful local merchants.



Kids crawl through the Fun Fish Obstacle Course.
Photo by Brian Barr.

Bruce Campbell, “Bear Magnet”

By Debra Srb, Special Uses Administrator, Cordova Ranger District



Special Uses Administrator Bruce Campbell

Wikipedia says the average person spends 33.3 % of each day at work. With all that time spent working, have you taken the time to get to know your fellow employees? My cubicle mate’s name is Bruce Campbell. Bruce is also a special uses administrator and a real character. We call him the “Bear Magnet,” a well-deserved nickname.

Bruce has been working for the Forest Service since 1975 when he started on the Tally Lake Ranger District, Flathead National Forest. He was a member of, and later crew leader for, the district timber crew. After seven seasons, Bruce received a call from his old buddy Leo Keebler asking if he was interested in a job on the Chugach. A week later, Bruce departed Whitefish with his worldly belongings piled high on the back of his pickup, along with his wife Sally and Shorty, their yellow Lab. The trek took seven days with a near head-on-collision outside of Whitehorse and freezing weather in Glennallen. The “Clampetts” arrived in good condition, although they hadn’t expected it to be that cold in late March.

In the early 80s, the Cordova Ranger District still had a timber crew. Bruce conducted stand exams, stocking surveys, cone collections and timber cruises, spending nearly the entire season on Montague and Hinchinbrook Islands. Bruce recalls tough summers where it rained near-

ly every day. Bear encounters were a frequent occurrence. Over the years Bruce estimates over a hundred brown bear encounters which include two charges. This is when he earned his nickname. Bruce says “If you’re close enough to see the catchlight in their eyes, you’re too close.” Bruce loved Cordova and the Alaskan lifestyle the job provided. His elation was short-lived however, as funding “flatlined” after a single season. Bruce went to work for the Cordova Harbor Master, but also applied to other Forests.

The Tongass hired him early the next spring to assist in a very active timber sale program. His new job was the layout and design of timber harvest units and roads 50-150 acre units. His duty station was Thorne Bay where he worked for a young Ranger by the name of Mike Novy. After three years, he transferred to the Thorne Bay recreation program, managing the cabins and trails program, ultimately ending up as a Recreation Program Administrator. While in Thorne Bay Bruce initiated the first Cave Management Program on the Forest by partnering with the National Speleological Society and

coordinating the first six years of cave inventory work on Prince of Wales Island.

After eight years, family matters brought Bruce back to the lower 48 where he hired on with the Umatilla National Forest as a Recreation and Minerals Program Administrator. He worked closely with mom-and-pop placer mine operators and was highly successful in developing many partnerships that successfully augmented and funded a complex recreation program. The land was different—arid, with Lodge Pole and Ponderosa Pines, and Douglas fir. Fishing was nearly non-existent by Alaskan standards.

As his forest began a reduction-in-force, Bruce began actively seeking a position in Alaska to free up a position for employees on the district. That’s the kind of heart he has. Thankfully for us, he landed a position back in Cordova. He worked in special uses and was charged with the implementation of a brand new program; the ANCSA 17(b) easements program. He and his crews planned for, designed, cleared, marked and surveyed approximately 130 miles of trail and site easements in the next six years on the district; living in bear country he was one the first known Forest Service employees to successfully begin using electric fences at camp. Bruce’s program was so successful it became the “poster child” for the 17(b) program within the State of Alaska. Since that time there have been other successful 17(b) easement programs implemented within the state.

Typically, vacation time or time off for Bruce is not like the rest of us who seek out tropical regions. Nope,

it always has to do with subsistence fishing, or the annual moose hunt, or some new Alaska adventure. Like clockwork he is off every January for a month of trapping; living soli-

tarily aboard his boat or in a tent in some remote rarely visited location of the forest. For him it is a spiritual respite. He loves the lifestyle.

As soon as he returns to work, the

cubicle is crowded with folks listening to him spin a yarn about his latest adventure. Take the time to get to know your fellow employee as he or she may have a great story to share.

A New Smokehouse for Kake Culture Camp

By Jane L. Smith, Archaeologist, Petersburg and Wrangell Ranger Districts



Campers fill the newly constructed smokehouse with eulachon. Photo by Jane Smith.



The Petersburg Ranger District crews lift a roof panel into place on the smokehouse. Photo by Gina Esposito.

This summer the Petersburg Ranger District's heritage and cabins crews built a new smokehouse for the 22nd Annual Kake Culture Camp. The camp has long provided unique educational experiences for teenaged overnight campers with hands-on lessons about the traditional Tlingit way of life. Most of the teen activities center on the smokehouse which is continually in use for smoking and drying subsistence foods prepared by the campers themselves. Salmon, eulachon, halibut, deer, moose and seal are generously donated by the community and will pack the smokehouse during the week.

At last year's camp we noticed the original smokehouse was beginning to show signs of its long life. After discussing our idea with the camp manager, and folks at the Organized Village of Kake, we set about finding funding, materials and expertise to build a new smokehouse.

We envisioned a smokehouse that could be disassembled and stored for subsequent use through the years to come. Jeff Robinson, PRD cabins foreman, embraced the task and drew up plans for a knock down style building based on the dimensions of the original smokehouse. Made of Tongass-grown and milled Alaska yellow cedar, we ordered all the lumber from Wood Cuts out of

Whale Pass on Prince of Wales Island and over-wintered it here in Petersburg. Jeff and his crew, Ben Freund and Tory DeAngelis, pre-cut the lumber into a kit that we could bring to Kake and build at culture camp.

On Day 1 of camp we arrived with two truckloads of lumber and gear. The teenagers gathered around and helped us unload the goods. Two teens, Baldomero Aceveda and Martin Lopez, were assigned as our helpers and saw the project through to the end. The forest service crew included me, Jeff, Ben, Tory, Gina Esposito and Linda Slaght. With drills, hammers and hardware Jeff's kit went together smoothly and by the end of the day the smokehouse was ready for duty. To hold with tradition, each of us signed the outside of the smokehouse; in the years to come it will be covered with the names of camp graduates.

Linda and I returned the next day as the campers were filling the rafters with eulachon. Two seals had arrived and the camp mentors were busily instructing the campers on process and respect. The seals too would soon reach the smokehouse and more goods would be coming, demanding prompt attention. The end of the week will culminate in a community potluck and the smoked and dried harvest will be shared by all.

A Bumper Year for Awards in Wrangell

By Judy Suing, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest

For Forest Service employees in Wrangell, 2009 was a bumper year for regional awards.

In June, Regional Forester Beth Pendleton presented a third of the annual Regional Forester Awards and one of two Regional Wilderness Awards to Erin Andresen, Alicia Stearns, Melissa Cady, and David Rak for serving their communities, the public, and the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

These individuals were nominated by their peers and selected by the Regional Forester from among all Forest Service employees in the Alaska Region.

District Information Receptionist Erin Andresen received the Excellence in Customer Service Award. She was selected for her cheerful, “can do” attitude while providing timely responses to public questions and requests for subsistence and recreation permits.

In addition to serving the public need, she also found time to help her fellow co-workers complete projects, boosting productivity and morale for the whole district.

Tongass National Forest Helicopter Manager Alicia Stearns received the Safety and Occupational Health Award. Her impressive 12-year, accident-free safety record in aviation can be attributed to her commitment to safety in her professional and personal life.

Stearns was recognized for her role as a mentor to other helicopter crew members and for her leadership in managing a variety of safety programs on the district



Left to right: Helicopter Manager Alicia Stearns, Forester David Rak, Regional Forester Beth Pendleton, and Information Receptionist Erin Andresen

including fuel management and off-highway vehicle safety.

Melissa Cady received the Meeting America’s Needs Award as a member of the Key Coastal Wetlands Inter-Forest Team. In 2009, the team drafted and began implementation of a five-year plan to maintain healthy and vibrant wetland ecosystems on Alaska’s national forests.

The team is comprised of seven members from throughout the Alaska Region and was established in 2006 to understand the effects of climate change and land use activities on the wetland ecosystems on which Alaska’s commercial, subsistence, and recreation communities depend.

District Recreation and Lands Forester David Rak received the Wilderness Champion Award. He has worked actively on the Wilderness program for 25 years to provide public access to these special areas and to meet the Chief’s Ten Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge.

Thanks to Rak’s contributions, the South Etoilin Wilderness now meets the required score for the Challenge and the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness is only one point away. The district still has four more years to meet the challenge.

Congratulations to all the winners of the regional awards. Their hard work and positive attitudes help us all meet our mission of caring for the land and serving people.



RF Beth Pendleton participates in a “ribbon cutting at the dedication of Middle Ridge Cabin while visiting employees in Wrangell.

All Work and No Play Makes Becky a Dull Girl

By Karen Brand, Acting Admiralty National Monument Ranger

Have you ever looked around your office and wondered what hidden talents fellow employees might possess? We've all heard about people's amazing (and not so amazing) fishing and hunting skills, and I think each office has at least one fabulous cook that makes or breaks each potluck, but what other skills are people honing during their free time?



Acting Deputy Regional Forester Becky Nourse with her kayak, a beautiful, yet functional, work of art.

I've had the opportunity over the years to talk to my co-workers about the arts, which are a passion for me. I've even managed to get them to volunteer for events and serve on committees, and so I know there are hidden talents among the Forest Service in the art world.

In February 2009 I submitted an application (which was accepted) with a friend to curate an art show for the Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council gallery season for 2009-2010. I chose the theme of the show,

which was the 13 Virtues of Benjamin Franklin (temperance, sincerity, frugality, tranquility, silence, industry, chastity, moderation, justice, order, resolution, cleanliness, and humility). It was an invitational show in which each artist could choose one or more virtues to interpret in any medium of their choice. I invited friends, local artists, and decided to include my co-workers as well.

I was joined by five other Forest Service employees who participated from across the region: Tanya Zastrow from the Cordova Ranger District, Cindi Lagoudakis from the Petersburg Supervisor's Office, and Barb Stanley, Becky Nourse, and Christal Rose from the Ketchikan Supervisor's Office. Forest Service retiree Jack Shay participated at the June 4 opening. Jack is a well known thespian in Ketchikan and he appeared as none other than Benjamin Franklin.

The show was held in June, so you no longer have the opportunity to see these works of art; however, I encourage you to look around, explore, and appreciate all the talents of our fellow scientific and artistic co-workers.



Christal Rose and Cindi Lagoudakis (standing) prepare for art show.

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

By Retirees Paul McIntosh and John Sandor

The National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association (NARFE) is the *only* association dedicated to safeguarding and enhancing the benefits of America's active and retired federal employees, and their survivors. NARFE is an advocate for both active and retired federal employees before Congress and the Administration. Membership in NARFE totals 300,000 federal workers and retirees according to the NARFE website. There are NARFE chapters in Sitka, Juneau, Anchorage, Wasilla, and Fairbanks.

Although NARFE is a national organization, it can specifically benefit federal employees and retirees in Alaska. For example, NARFE supported passage of the Non-Foreign Area Retirement Equity Assurance Act of 2009, which became effective on January 1, 2010. The Act will transition federal workers in Alaska and Hawaii from COLA to locality pay, and will significantly improve their retirement pay if they earn their "high three" in Alaska.

Visit <http://www.narfe.org/home>. Click on the "Find a NARFE Chapter" button for chapter details and contact information. You can search for chapters by state or zip code.

Tongass National Forest Awards

For Interpretive and Conservation Education Excellence

By Faith L. Duncan, Interpretive and Conservation Education Program Manager

 **Donald A. Frank, Meritorious Service in Conservation Education Support:**

Donald was recognized for his outstanding contributions to educating youth through teaching carving and design skills in Angoon, Admiralty National Monument.

 **Ron Marvin, Master Interpretive Manager:**

Ron was recognized for his significant management expertise at the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center and the Tongass Marine Highway program, Juneau Ranger District.

 **Victoria E. Houser, Distinguished Interpreter:**

Tory was recognized for her originality, creativity, and outstanding contributions to interpretive services, Craig Ranger District.



Craig District Ranger Greg Killinger and Victoria Houser

Congratulations to the three Tongass National Forest employees for being recognized in the Forest interpretation and conservation education 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 the 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 that was professionally matted and framed.

This awards and recognition program was acknowledged as a key element in the Forest's newly revised Interpretive and Conservation Education Strategic Plan (2009). Along with Regional awards recognizing regional interpretive excellence, or the Hakala Award, and Sea-



Donald Frank

sonal Interpreter of the Year award, this comprehensive Forest program serves to recognize interpreters and conservation educators in six new categories, including partnership support, volunteerism, programs, management, field positions and new positions.



Ron Marvin