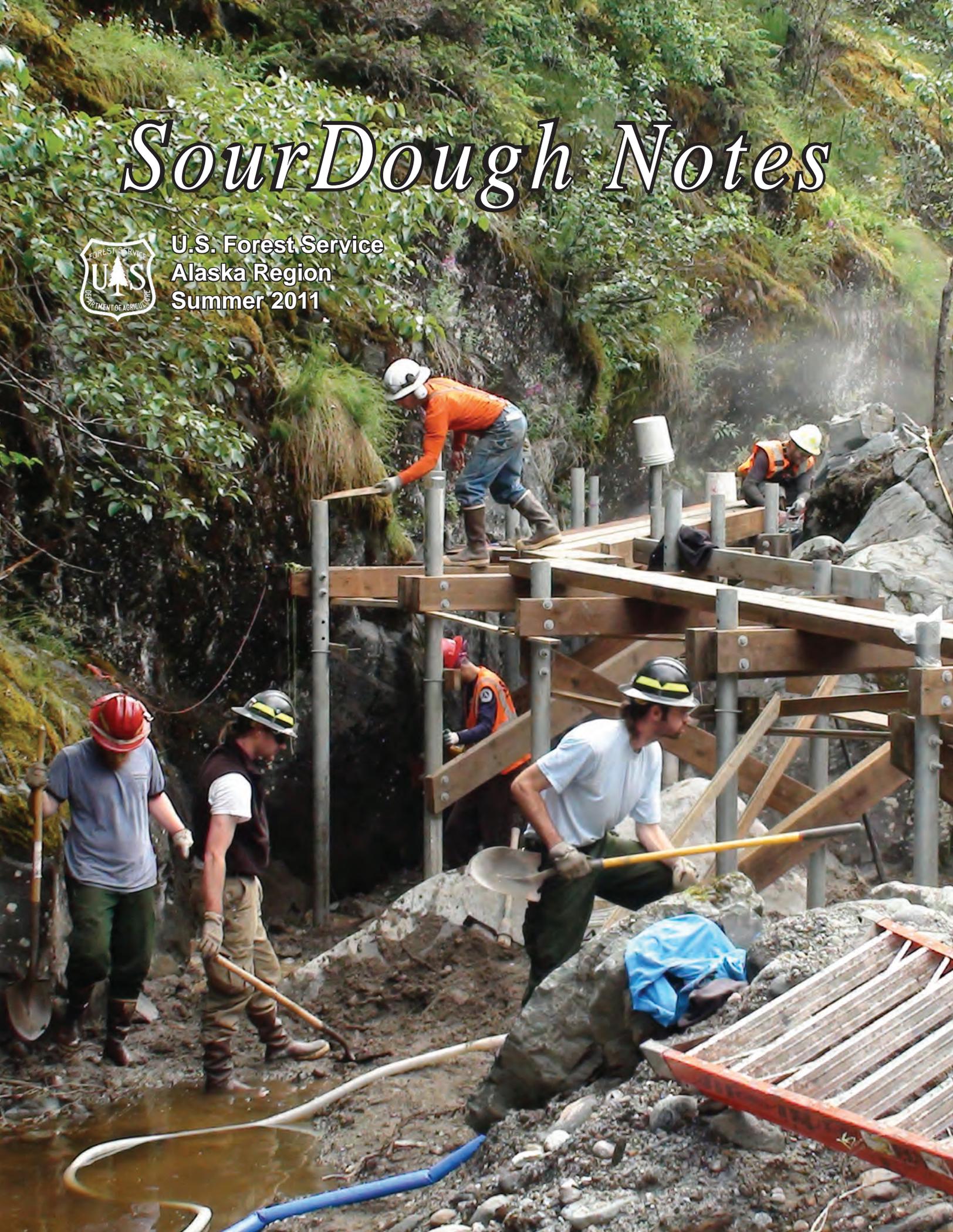


# *Sourdough Notes*



U.S. Forest Service  
Alaska Region  
Summer 2011



ON THE COVER:

*The Juneau Ranger District and SAGA trail crews work on elevated walkway to Nugget Falls. Story begins on page 3. Photo by Teresa Haugh.*

## SourDough Notes

Quarterly news magazine for the

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### Summer 2011

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Your suggestions, articles, and photographs are welcome.

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INSIDE :

|  |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|
| <a href="#">Ken Zogas Awarded</a> .....              | 2  | <a href="#">Iditarod Trail to Classroom</a> ..... | 16 |
| <a href="#">Trek to Nugget Falls</a> .....           | 3  | <a href="#">Quiz: From the Archives</a> .....     | 17 |
| <a href="#">Colossal Bridge on Titan Trail</a> ..... | 4  | <a href="#">Federal Subsistence Program</a> ..... | 18 |
| <a href="#">Meet Kruzof</a> .....                    | 5  | <a href="#">Chugach Relay for Life</a> .....      | 19 |
| <a href="#">Forest Management Study</a> .....        | 6  | <a href="#">Yakutat Tern Festival</a> .....       | 20 |
| <a href="#">We CAN Do It</a> .....                   | 7  | <a href="#">Ben VanAlen Awarded</a> .....         | 21 |
| <a href="#">Celebration, Reconnection</a> .....      | 8  | <a href="#">Welcome Ted Schenck</a> .....         | 21 |
| <a href="#">Search and Rescue Training</a> .....     | 10 | <a href="#">Ahead in the Safety Journey</a> ..... | 22 |
| <a href="#">Paul Hennon Awarded</a> .....            | 11 | <a href="#">Recreation: A Few Simple Steps</a> .. | 23 |
| <a href="#">Rocky Bay Fish Ladder</a> .....          | 12 | <a href="#">Int'l Youth Eco Forum</a> .....       | 24 |
| <a href="#">Rendezvous in the Rockies</a> .....      | 13 | <a href="#">Girl Scout Encampment</a> .....       | 25 |
| <a href="#">POW Island Road</a> .....                | 14 | <a href="#">Classrooms for Climate Change</a> ... | 26 |
| <a href="#">Changing the Mind-set</a> .....          | 15 | <a href="#">Celebrating IYOF</a> .....            | 27 |
|  |    | <a href="#">IYOF Poster</a> .....                 | 28 |

## Ken Zogas Recognized for Aviation Safety

James Hubbard, deputy chief, State and Private Forestry, announced this past April that Ken Zogas, Biological Technician, Alaska Region, was the recipient of the 2011 Forest Health Protection Aviation Safety Award. This award commemorates contributions made by the fallen aerial survey crew of N30266—Rodney Whiteman, Dan Snider, and Patrick Jessup—by annually recognizing excellence in forest health aviation activities.

Deputy Chief Hubbard’s announcement read, “Mr. Zogas routinely achieves the highest levels of performance and accomplishment in each of the criteria evaluated: promote a positive aviation safety culture; conduct forest health aviation activities to directly benefit the resource; and build efficiency and effectiveness among federal and state partners in forest health aviation safety. He has been involved in FHP aviation for 30 years in Alaska where he continues to excel.”  
Congratulations, Ken.



*Ken Zogas displays his 2011 Forest Health Protection Aviation Safety Award. Photo by Steve Swenson.*

# Trek to Nugget Falls No Longer a Hop, Skip, and a Jump

By Ed Grossman, Recreation Program Manager, Juneau Ranger District

“A strong person and a waterfall  
always channel their own path.”  
Author unknown

There is a lot of truth in the saying, “If you build it they will come.” I would further submit if you build it at their request, they will thank you, as well.

The long anticipated completion of the Tongass’ newest pedestrian attraction, Nugget Falls Trail, is being realized. Over the years, Forest Service managers have observed that visitors are irresistibly attracted to this magnificent waterfall located near Juneau’s Mendenhall Glacier. The visitors have used an unimproved, “hop, skip, and jump” route to this destination, especially as summer snow melt raises the level of Mendenhall Lake. As a result, the public over the years has repeatedly requested that we construct an improved access route to the falls.

The planning and construction of this route was primarily funded through two Alaska Trails Initiative grants (totaling almost \$200K) administered by the State of Alaska Division of State Parks. Guide/Outfitter permit fee dollars (about \$80K),



Visitors bushwhack through the alders along Mendenhall Lake’s flooded shore on their way to the irresistible Nugget Falls. Photo by Hans vonRekowski.



Visitors at the terminus of Nugget Falls.  
Photo by Ed Grossman.

returned to the Forest Service for enhancement projects like this, were also applied to this effort.

Nugget Falls Trail’s popularity with locals and visitors is already established. With nearly a half a million visitors to the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor’s Center each year, it is safe to assume the number of Nugget Falls Trail users will be measured in hundreds of thousands. The trail may also provide approximately 0.8 miles of additional fully accessible pathway for guided hiking operations working in the vicinity of the visitor center in the future.

So, the next time you are through Alaska’s Capital City, consider allowing time for this leisurely stroll amongst glacial erratics, post-glacial vegetative succession, and dunes of glacial till. Just follow the roar while soaking in the scenery, and eventually you will have the option of stepping into the mist of what is left of the previous winter’s snow.

## Special thanks to:

### Juneau Ranger District Trail Crew

- Peter Cross
- Matt Adams

### Trail Crew Assistants

- Josh Blechman
- Sarah Harwell
- Adam Kackstetter
- Dale McFarlin
- Sarah Roop
- Collin Wigfield-Gorka

### Sitka Ranger District Employees

- Steve Pauli
- Nate Vreeland
- Tripp Henderson
- Kyle Hert
- Kurt Prond

### State of Alaska

- Steve Neel
- Bill Luck

### Last But Not Least

- Matt Philips (former landscape architect)
- Regional Office
- Southeast Alaska Guidance Association
- Tongass Forest Supervisor’s Office

# Colossal Bridge for the Titan Trail

By Eleanor Oman, ETS Civil Engineer and Rod Dell'Andrea, RO Structural Engineer



The Titan Trail Bridge awaits foot traffic. Photos by Eleanor Oman.

What's in a name, you ask? The short answer—absolutely everything, at least to Karen Brand, Recreation/Wilderness/Lands Staff Officer for the Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Ranger District. When Brand found an opportunity to use American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for a trail project located on her district, she quickly identified all of the superior benefits the project would create for visitors and local area hikers. Her vision was to create something colossal, befitting of a trail that had been given the name *Titan*.

Using ARRA funds, Brand enlisted the aid of a Forest Service enterprise team, Enterprise Technical Services, to manage the project to completion. ETS served as the project manager and the contracting officer's representative, working to create the development drawings, specifications and cost estimate for the contract solicitation package. ETS conducted several site visits to

monitor construction progress and provide timely technical assistance.

The result of Brand's foresight and the ETS effort is the addition of the new Titan Trail Bridge. Its grand size and strong design will reflect the attributes of the trail from which it draws its name for many years to come. The bridge is destined to become a very popular subject with photographers and artists as it gracefully crosses a beautiful reach of salmon stream along the Titan Trail.

The Titan Trailhead parking area is located just off the Salmon River Road approximately three miles from Hyder, Alaska (pop. 100). Hyder is accessible from the Canadian highway system through Stewart, B.C., and by float plane and ship from Ketchikan, Alaska. The 4.8 mile trail, managed by the Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Ranger District, permits hikers to climb a nicely-graded tread with switchbacks up the mountain through old

growth forest and open avalanche slopes. Hikers are able to reach the alpine ridge marking the border between Alaska and British Columbia. Along the way, hikers can see fabulous elevated views of the Salmon River Valley, with glimpses of the ice cap and glaciers.

The new bridge provides improved trail access by eliminating a deep water crossing on Fish Creek within the first quarter mile of the trail. The Fish Creek Wildlife Observation Site, also managed by the district, and just ¼ mile from the trailhead, draws as many as 40,000 visitors annually for world-class bear viewing opportunities. District employees believe that a good percentage of these visitors will likely take advantage of the enhanced hiking opportunity the new footbridge offers.

Paul Larkin, district forestry technician, said, "It's a splendid addition to the local infrastructure. The Hyder Community is very pleased with this project."

The new bridge is 90 feet long and 5 feet wide. It is a single span, glued-laminated, tied-arch superstructure built on timber sills. Its design is uniquely Alaskan, and was originally developed for two installations on the Trail of Blue Ice near Girdwood. The design was chosen for the Titan Trail because it provides substantial clearance above stream flows by placing most of the bridge superstructure components above the walking surface of the deck. The bridge deck and floor beam system are suspended from each arch rib with six steel tension rod and hanger assemblies. In this configuration, the arch ribs always remain in compression. To prevent the ends of the two ribs from

“kicking” outward under load, the ends of each rib are “tied” with a glued-laminated beam that always remains in tension. The pedestrian barrier railing is constructed entirely of Alaska Yellow Cedar, taking advantage of the natural durability and decay-resistance of the species, and minimizing the amount of preservative-treated wood over the stream.

The general contractor was Korpela Construction, a local Hyder firm owned by Nick and Jackie Korpela. Both Korpela’s worked as seasonal employees for the district trails, cabin and wilderness crews before starting their own construction firm. The project work included designing, fabricating, transporting and installing the bridge. Additional work included the installation of approach steps, 127 feet of elevated boardwalk, construction of 72 feet of new trail and the reconstruction of 700 feet of trail from the trailhead parking lot to the new bridge crossing.

**Bridge Team:**

- Eleanor Oman, Project Manager and Contracting Officer
- Clark Simpson, Forest Service Inspector
- Karen Brand, District Recreation Staff Officer
- Western Wood Structures, Inc., Tualatin, Ore.



*The Titan Trail Bridge spans Fish Creek.*

## Meet Kruzof

*By Jacqueline Foss, Soil Scientist, Tongass National Forest*

**H**i! I’m Kruzof, the newest soil on the Tongass National Forest. I’m classified as an Alic Haplocryand—the first of my kind ever described in Southeast Alaska. I developed in the deep ash and pumice deposits of Mount Edgecumbe on Kruzof Island. I am in the subalpine and alpine areas on Mount Edgecumbe and Crater Mountain.

“But wait,” you may ask, “aren’t there a bunch of soils developed in the Mount Edgecumbe ash already described and classified?”

Well, there are several other soils developed in ash in the Sitka area. These are spodosols. This is thanks to the 100-plus inches of rainfall moving through the soil, forming zones of depletion and zones of accumulation. I don’t have either of those zones. I am in a landscape position where the snow cover limits my development or under constant disturbance.

The “and” at the end of Haplocryand stands for Andisol—a soil developed in volcanic ash. The other parts of my taxonomy describe the climate I am in. “Cry” in the Cryand is for Cryic. My temperature does not range more than 8 degrees Celsius from summer to winter. “Haplo” means common. I am just a regular, old Cryand. Alic refers to the type of ash I developed from. The ash from Mount Edgecumbe has high rates of aluminum. I have more than 2.0cmol(+)/kg Al<sub>3+</sub><sup>1</sup> in my sediments. This differentiates me from all the Haplocryands that have a lot of glass (Vitric) or are poorly drained (Aquic).

If I were formed in anything but volcanic ash, I would be classified as an Entisol or Inceptisol or, yes, even a spodosols. I am a unique member of the Tongass soil family and look forward to joining my brethren. Next time you’re out hiking the Mount Edgecumbe trail, be sure to say, “Hello.” I’m just under the heather.



*Newly unearthed soil, classified as an Alic Haplocryand, near Mt. Edgecumbe. Photo by Barth Hamberg.*

<sup>1</sup> two centimoles of aluminum per kilogram of soil

# Forest Management Weight to Scale Study

By Bob Vermillion, Forest Products, Regional Office



*Regional Measurements Specialist Ken Dinsmore studies the relationship of weight to scaled volume in commercial-sized sawlogs. Photo by Bob Vermillion.*

The Ocean Boulevard Recovery Wildlife Restoration Project is an active vegetation management contract on the Sitka Ranger District, Tongass National Forest. The primary objective of this project is to improve wildlife habitat, specifically winter forage for Sitka black-tailed deer. The project occurs in young-growth stands of timber located near False Island along Peril Strait. Treatments include uniform thinning to a 25-foot spacing and gap-thinning to create small openings in the canopy. Both thinning schemes are designed to increase forage production and improve travel for deer through otherwise dense stand conditions. These stands regenerated to Sitka spruce, western hemlock and red alder following clearcut harvesting during the late 1960s. The Ocean Boulevard project represents one of the first treatments of commercial-sized young-growth timber on the Tongass. The project provides an opportunity for resource

managers to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of such treatments over time, and to gather additional information needed for future management of young-growth stands.

Toward that end, Ken Dinsmore, Regional Measurements Specialist, initiated a study in the Ocean Boulevard Project Area to determine the relationship of weight to scaled volume in commercial-sized sawlogs being harvested. Commercial-sized sawlogs are defined by regional merchantability specifications; a minimum of nine inches in diameter at breast height (DBH), at least 12 feet long, to a six-inch top diameter. Determining the weight of biomass material is also an objective. For the purpose of this study, biomass is essentially the portion of the tree that is not merchantable; tops less than six inches in diameter, limbs, and needles. There is a lot of local interest in biomass as a potentially marketable product and source of renewable energy. With that interest in mind, Dinsmore is beginning to develop a process for quantifying the biomass component on treated sites and developing conversion factors



*Ken Dinsmore and Tyler Miller limbing, topping, and hooking choker cable for lifting trees. Photo by Bob Vermillion.*

between scaled sawlog volume and total weight of young-growth timber.

Equipped with a digital scale (three-ton capacity) mounted on an excavator, Dinsmore works with contractor Todd Miller of TM Construction out of Sitka. The goal is to obtain weight and scale data by sampling each tree species and diameter class represented in the project area. Whole trees are first yarded to the Ocean Boulevard road, positioned and lifted to obtain total weight. Trees are then limbed, topped and weighed again to obtain

the merchantable weight of commercial-sized sawtimber. Dinsmore obtains cubic log scale in the process. The biomass component is the limbed and topped portion of the tree. The study will yield weight in pounds per cubic foot for commercial young-growth species in the project area. It will also begin providing more reliable estimates of tonnage per acre for biomass. Dinsmore will increase the confidence of data through sampling in other young-growth treatment project areas on the Tongass. Ultimately, the study will lead to development of

forest-wide weight-to-scale conversion factors for young-growth sawtimber and help prepare the region for opportunities to market biomass.

The weight to scale work is one part of an ongoing effort by the Regional Forest Management group to develop efficient and economical options for recovering and valuing marketable products from young-growth treatments. Additional work in progress includes finalizing and calibrating cost models for harvest and removal of young-growth and biomass material.

## We CAN Do It Feds, Farmers and Friends Feed Families in Sitka

*By Michelle Putz, Writer/Editor, Tongass National Forest*

**F**orest Service employees in Sitka are once again participating in the government-wide *Feds, Farmers and Friends Feed Families* summer-long food drive. We started in June and have made our first 10-pound donation

to the Salvation Army which hosts one of Sitka's local food banks. With a little effort, we will ramp up our donations each month.

In 2010, we collected over 180 pounds of food, including not only non-perishable items, but fruits,

vegetables, and meats as well.

Across the country, government employees, cooperators and friends donated one million pounds of food to our nation's emergency food assistance agencies. This year, the goal is two million.

In 2010, USDA sponsored a food sculpture contest in Washington, D.C., and encouraged field

offices like Sitka to participate. As Sitka employees brought in their donations, we encouraged them to add to the free-form "sculpture" we were building. While we did not win a prize for our sculpting skills, it was a great way to visually remind people that we needed their donation to make the sculpture bigger.

The food drive runs through the end of August, so there is still time for employees to get involved. Bring non-perishable food to your office if your office is collecting food, drop some food by the Sitka office if you are coming through, or sign up and get your office involved at [www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov](http://www.fedsfeedfamilies.gov).

Starting a food drive is relatively easy. Begin by contacting your local food bank or other human services providers to find out their needs. Recruit your fellow employees to join you in bringing food, then weigh and deliver the food as often as needed. Feel free to contact me at [mputz@fs.fed.us](mailto:mputz@fs.fed.us) if you have questions or just need a little inspiration.



*Michelle Putz begins a "sculpture" of canned goods donated by employees for the local food bank in Sitka. Photo by Perry Edwards.*

# Celebration, Reconnection, and Drum Beats

By Rachel Myron, Bert Adams Sr., and Melinda Hernandez

**H**unter is *L'uknaḡ.ádi* (coho clan), *Gunaxoo Khwáan*, and at age three, he was among the youngest of about 125 people gathered to dance and beat his drum at *Gunaxoo*, the heartland of his traditional homeland. Like Hunter, most who attended a celebration at Dry Bay May 21-23 are deeply tied to the area through their Tlingit lineage. Through the event, participants were able to connect with place and history through ceremony, storytelling, dancing, and excursions to culturally important places.

The celebration was the brainchild of Bert Adams, Sr. whose Tlingit names are *Kadashan* and *Naatskeek*. His goal was to share the success of a long-standing partnership among the *Gunaxoo Khwáan*, the National Park Service, and the Forest Service in relocating village sites which Tlingit people were forced to leave beginning in the early 1900s.

The last potlatch in the Dry Bay area was held in the Frog House at

Cannery Creek in 1909. The territorial governor at that time, John Brady, issued a decree that, following a final potlatch in Sitka in 1904, potlatches were to be henceforth banned. The stated purpose of the policy was to facilitate the assimilation of Alaska Natives into western culture. Eventually, children from throughout the region were required to get an education. A mission was established in Yakutat, 60 miles away from Dry Bay. The *Gunaxoo* people resisted; although they went to Yakutat in the fall so that children could attend school, they returned to Dry Bay annually in early spring to fish and hunt for their traditional foods. This seasonal pattern continued until the United States got involved in World War II, when, for security reasons, people were forbidden to return to their lands and had to make their permanent homes in Yakutat.

The collaborative work among the *Gunaxoo Khwáan* and the Park Service began in 1996. In 1997, the Forest Service was invited to participate. That

year, hand in hand, *Khwáan* members and agency archeologists identified the village of *Guseix* on the Akwe River and several other sites on the Akwe and in Dry Bay. The *Gunaxoo Khwáan* and the Park Service continued the partnership in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2005, conducting fieldwork that focused on NPS managed lands and conducting workshops to document oral histories and place names. In 2007, 2009 and 2010 Forest Service archeologists rejoined the effort participating in short field trips on the Akwe.

Over time, two additional houses were tentatively identified at *Guseix*. A detailed site map has been sketched and two charcoal samples have been collected. Trees in this area are about 400 years old and the radiocarbon samples yielded dates of approximately 200 years. Importantly, by piecing the archeology and oral histories together, Adams has identified each of the houses by name at *Guseix*. The house names are:

- Mountain House (*Shaa Hít*)
- Whale House (*Yáay Hít*)
- Frog House (*Xíxch'i Hít*)
- Boulder House (*Eech Hít*)
- Sleepy House (*Ta Hít*)
- Sea Lion House (*Taan Hít*)
- Far-Out-House (*Diginaa Hít*).

Adam's dream for 2011 was to bring clan members and descendants to Dry Bay to commemorate the lives of the ancestors, celebrate the discovery of the remnants of tribal houses and to bring the beat of drums to the ancestral land of the *Gunaxoo* once again. Among others, members of the *L'uknaḡ.ádi* clan (Raven, Coho), *Lukaax.ádi* (Raven, Sockeye) and *Shangukeidí* (Eagle, Thunderbird) clans came



Hunter Jacobson, Esther Brooks and Helen John beat their drums during a performance in Dry Bay. Photo by Cathy Wassillie.

from as far away as Seattle to attend the event. The celebration was sponsored and supported by Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, the Park Service, the Forest Service, the Alaska Humanities Forum, Sealaska Corporation and local organizations. Three film crews documented the occasion.

There were feasts with traditional foods such as king and sockeye salmon, seal, and herring roe. In full regalia, the Mt. St. Elias Dancers performed the songs that connect all the *Gunaxoo K'hwáan* to Dry Bay, arguably one of the most dramatically beautiful and remote settings in Alaska.

• • • • •  
**"I'm happy the drums  
 are beating again"**

*Hunter Jacobson, age 3*

• • • • •  
 Small groups visited *Guseix*, the site of the Frog House on *Stihinuk Heeni* (Cannery Creek) and *K'uxáach Héeni*, known today as Williams Creek. A group of 45 people visited a *Shungukeidí* legend site known to commemorate the legend of the Man and his Dog Who Turned to Stone. Every field trip generated its own story—at some there were tears of mixed joy and sadness.

Elder Lorraine Adams was among the group that visited *K'uxáach Héeni* (Williams Creek). Her grandfather, *K'uxáach* (John Williams), was born and raised there and had built an elaborate house. Though her family spent their time closer to *Stikinuk Héeni* Creek down the bay, she remembers the joy of visiting her grandfather in his "big" house located in a field of strawberries at the mouth of *K'uxáach Héeni*. Her grandfather and all others who lived in Dry Bay moved to Yakutat at the beginning of WWII. *K'uxáach* died shortly after the forced move. It was decades before Lorraine was able to return.



Small groups visited *Guseix*, the site of the Frog House on *Stihinuk Heeni* (Cannery Creek) and *K'uxáach Héeni*, known today as Williams Creek. Photo by Daryl James.

Over time, the Alsek River has radically eroded the Dry Bay shoreline, particularly at *K'uxáach Héeni*. Lorraine's grandfather's house is long gone, but with the help of the collaborative effort and grant funds which made this event possible, she was able to stand at the creek edge and share her memories with her family, including her grandnephew Hunter and his five-year-old cousin, Helen. Following her storytelling, Lorraine's niece and nephew sang two beautiful Tlingit songs to the accompaniment of a traditional drum held in the family for generations.

On another field trip 15 people went to the Akwe River to visit the village of *Guseix*. Here, seven tribal houses have been identified—one of the major reasons for this celebration. It is here where Raven, after he had completed all his creations in this area, pulled in the large canoe from the ocean and let out the animals, fishes, birds and wildlife onto the land. The story is told about how he took the large house off the canoe and placed it half way up the Akwe River.

It was called *Diginaa Hít* (Far-Out-House) because it was the first tribal house and because Raven pulled it to shore. When it got too small for people to live in, other houses were built. Now all seven houses are accounted for and documented in the village of *Guseix* for future generations. Those who went on this trip came from some of these houses.

The celebration was exhilarating for all, and life changing for some. Lorraine DeAsis said, "We learned family Tlingit names and connections that we thought were gone from our grasp forever." Many reported that they were determined to keep those connections alive by teaching their children, nephew and nieces, and grandchildren.

In Tlingit belief, once the sound of the drum has ceased on the land, those people have died off and become extinct. The *Gunaxoo K'wáan* has brought the drum back and is determined to keep the beat alive in *Gunaxoo*—for Hunter's and Helen's generation, and for all of us.

*Gunalchéesh* (Thank you).

# Search and Rescue Training Exercise

By Robert MacDonald, Assistant Budget and Program Manager, Regional Office

There are many different types of activities occurring on U.S. Forest Service lands. Recently, a unique activity took place on the Tongass National Forest.

On March 26-27, 2011, the various search and rescue groups located in Juneau performed a Joint Search and Rescue Training Exercise (Joint SAREX) in the vicinity of the Dan Moller cabin on Douglas Island.

Usually, these groups train independently to keep proficient in search and rescue techniques. However, this exercise was designed

to have the groups work together to combine assets in an effective rescue operation. This exercise was very successful and prepared all for working together in the future.

The Joint SAREX scenario involved a helicopter making an emergency landing on the side of a ridge in the upper Kowee Creek drainage, causing a small avalanche toward the helicopter and a group of backcountry skiers. In addition, the FAA “received” a MAYDAY call from the helicopter, the U.S. Coast Guard and the Air Force received a 406 MHz ELT alert from the downed helicopter, and a call was

made to 911 from a concerned citizen near the Eaglecrest Ski Resort reporting a loud reverberating bang and screams.

In preparation for the event, coordination meetings were held at TEMSCO Helicopters and a training session covering helicopter operations (safety, sling loads, basket operations, loading/unloading, directing from the ground, landing zone training), communications, EMS/AST information (hypothermia, transporting victims, documenting the scene), and technologies (FLIR, avalanche transceivers, ELT, GPS, snowmobile safety).

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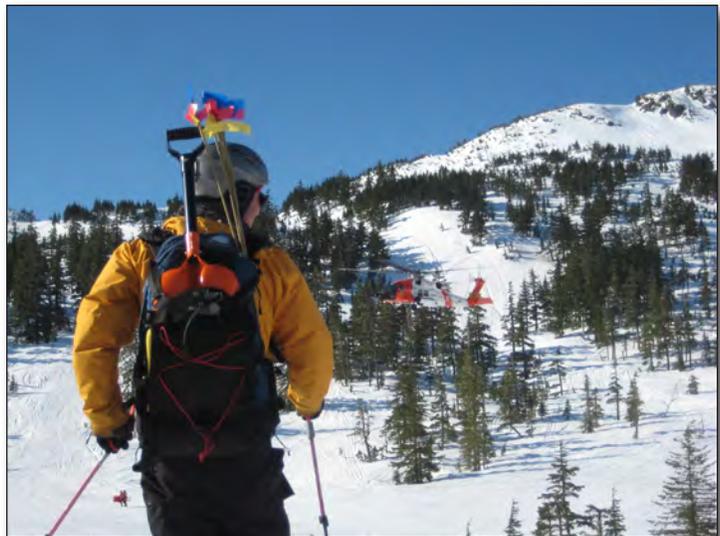
## Saturday, March 26

A skills day was held at the training area near the Dan Moller cabin and included snowmobile transport, communications, helicopter airlift and sling load operations, practice with avalanche transceivers, avalanche safety, digging-out procedures, and a search dogs demonstration. All ground crew members involved gained great field experience.

## Sunday March 27, 8:05 a.m.

The formal training mission took place. The Civil Air Patrol’s Juneau Squadron received a call from the Incident Commander (Alaska State Trooper Jeff Landvatter) that a simulated helicopter crash occurred up in the mountains on Douglas Island and the Civil Air Patrol was asked to perform an aerial search to locate the crash site. Trooper Landvatter then began notifying and activating the other emergency response teams.

A Civil Air Patrol aircrew was put together and they had a Cessna 206 in the air in less than 30 minutes. This aircraft was piloted by the USFS Regional Office’s Robert MacDonald, a CAP Search and Rescue Mission Pilot. MacDonald and his aircrew began an ELT search using Direction Finding gear and tracked in to the simulated downed aircraft. The aircrew pinpointed the signal in the Dan Moller cabin area on the Tongass National Forest.



A SAR ground team member observing USCG helicopter operations on the Tongass National Forest. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard.

After relaying the location to the incident commander using a pre-assigned air-to-ground radio frequency, Trooper Landvatter proceeded to organize the ground crews to head up to the simulated accident site.

## 9:45 a.m.

The SEADOGS crew had found the first victim, had medical teams inbound to their location and MacDonald continued to circle overhead providing air cover in the Civil Air Patrol’s Cessna 206.

**10:43 a.m.**

The U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Sitka's MH-60T Jayhawk helicopter arrived on the scene and began performing basket operations with a dummy in the predetermined landing zone.

**11:00 a.m.**

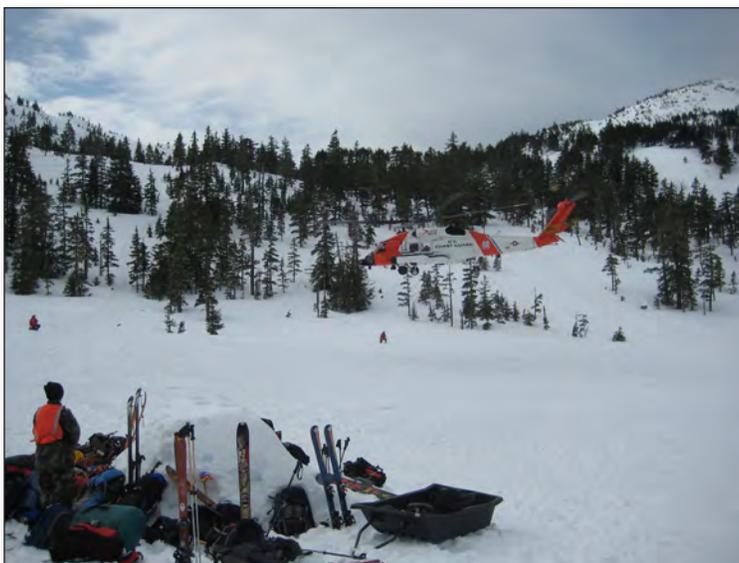
We completed the goals of the exercise and Incident Commander Landvatter cleared us all to leave the scene.

After the mission there was a debriefing held at TEMSCO Helicopters. All involved were very pleased with how the mission went and on how beneficial the training was.

For more information go to the following NBC link where you'll see a short article and a two-minute video segment covering the training: <http://www.kath.tv/?page=news&story=155>.

#### **Participants:**

- Alaska State Troopers
- City/Borough of Juneau Emergency Management
- City and Borough of Juneau Fire Department
- Civil Air Patrol's Juneau Composite Squadron
- Douglas Mountain Rescue
- Eaglecrest Ski Patrol
- Juneau Mountain Rescue
- Juneau Police Department
- Juneau Snowmobile Club's Emergency Response Team
- Kensington Gold Mine
- SEADOGS (Southeast Alaska Dogs Organized for Ground Search)
- TEMSCO Helicopters
- U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Sitka
- U.S. Coast Guard Sector Juneau
- U.S. Forest Service Law Enforcement



*U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Sitka's MH-60T Jayhawk performing basket operations near the Dan Moller Cabin. Photo: U.S. Coast Guard*

## **Paul Hennon Receives Prestigious National Award**



*Left to right: Research Plant Pathologist Paul Hennon greets PNW Asst. Director for Program Development Paul Brewster at a Forest Service event at Auke Recreation Area. Photo by Pamela Finney.*

James Hubbard, deputy chief, State and Private Forestry, announced this past April that Paul E. Hennon from the Alaska Region and Pacific Northwest Research Station was selected to receive the David F. Thomas award for excellence in customer service. The award, named in memory of David F. Thomas—a career employee of the Forest Service with an outstanding service record of achievement in the field of customer service—is given to a member of a Forest Health Protection staff who has demonstrated significant contributions in: furthering the Forest Health Protection mission; sustaining internal and external customer service; and, helping build a team environment for their unit.

Hennon was recognized for his numerous achievements, especially those pertaining to his work on Alaska yellow cedar and how it is being impacted by the effects of climate change.

# Rocky Bay Fish Ladder Repaired

By Ken Hodges, Fisheries Biologist, Cordova Ranger District

What does it take to repair a fish ladder? Well, this past June, this is what it took to repair Rocky Bay fish ladder in a remote part of Prince William Sound:

- 25 - helicopter sling loads
- 5 - six-hour boats trips
- 12,000 pounds of concrete
- An ocean of sweat!

But, after 28 years of service, you'd expect the structure to need a little touching up, and maybe we didn't have it as bad as the 1983 crew.

The original concrete walls from 1983 and the aluminum fish ladder itself were still in good shape. However, the rock-filled wire gabion baskets that supported one side of the ladder were rusting and losing rocks. The Cordova Ranger District fish crew and two Student Conservation Association volunteers had the task of removing the old gabions and replacing them with longer lasting concrete walls.

In 1983, Tom Cappiello was a 20-year-old volunteer straight from California, and he was in charge of filling those gabions.

"I'd never been to Alaska before. I landed in Cordova and two days later I was out at Rocky Bay filling gabions with rock by hand," Cappiello recalled in a recent interview. "I remember days of filling those baskets by myself and developing the gabion corollary: the bigger the rock, the faster the gabion gets filled."

As the 2011 fish crew can attest, Cappiello wasn't exaggerating. As we dismantled the gabions, there were huge boulders we could barely lift in every basket. And we had to remove every last one of them.

Hauling hundreds of 60-lb sacks of concrete was another delightful



Newly hired Fisheries Biologist Jeff Jackson (in the center trench) wires the rebar in the forms before the concrete gets poured. Photo by Luca Adelfio.

activity enjoyed by both the 2011 and 1983 crews. This year, one anonymous SCA volunteer figured that he had carried every sack of concrete at least once and probably two or three times by the time

we were finished. The sacks were loaded onto the big work boat with some being taken down into the hold. After that, they were taken off the boat, into an inflatable raft, out of the raft, and up the beach well



The crew completes the finishing touches on the forms for the concrete wall. The wall will help support the fish ladder and keep it from shifting during high flows. Photo by Luca Adelfio.



A helicopter transports bags of concrete to the work site.

above the tide line where the helicopter would then take the bags to the work site.

Cappiello had it worse in 1983. Instead of dropping the concrete right next to the construction zone, their helicopter set the concrete along the edge of the lake above the fish ladder site.

“It wasn’t all that far, but you had to cross the creek at the outlet of the lake and then you had to take this

goat trail down the canyon. I just remember it being extremely hard work. Everybody else had been there several days earlier and were carrying two sacks at a time to reduce the number of trips. I could get one sack on my shoulder, but I just couldn’t get the second one up there.”

Again, Cappiello wasn’t exaggerating. The creek is just a pile of slimy algae-covered rocks, and if you slip on the two-foot wide goat trail, you’ll fall down a 15-foot cliff with boulders at the bottom.

Despite all of the pain and sweat, the project work was completed successfully, and coho salmon will spawn and rear in the watershed upstream for another 28 years or so. And without gabion baskets to rust out, we may not need to haul sacks of concrete again for even longer.

Cappiello’s summer of ’83, despite the labor, is still his favorite. “Those were the good days. Those were the best. I showed up in Alaska with a fly rod; that’s all I had. We’d work hard all day, but after work I’d go fishing and catch resident cutthroat trout until midnight. Tons of them.”

*Tom Cappiello now works for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Anchorage.*



## Rendezvous in the Rockies Vail 2012

FOREST SERVICE REUNION

The site? Vail Mountain Marriott in Vail, Colorado

The date? September 17-21, 2012

More Info? <http://fsreunion2012.com>

The 2012 Forest Service Reunion, *Rendezvous in the Rockies*, promises to, “Enrich and sustain the culture, traditions, and history of the United States Forest Service, and provide all attendees with a memorable opportunity to reconnect and celebrate!”

Mark your calendar and make sure to talk to others about attending this event. The location is outstanding and the facility is wonderful. Vail is centrally located in the Rocky Mountains, and is easily accessible by train, plane, and automobile. U.S. Forest Service retirees, current employees, partners and vendors are invited and we expect a good mix to attend. There will be plenty to do at the reunion: renew friendships, get updates on Forest

Service activities, attend historical presentations, and meet with current Forest Service leadership.

The next reunion is being planned by a group of inspired Forest Service Retirees. Tom Thompson chairs the Planning Committee and has pulled together a hard working team. These folks are working to deliver a wonderful program, exciting field trips and other special events. The location, timing and content will combine to ensure that all participants enjoy

spectacular country, lasting friendships, and wonderful memories. More specific information will be made available as the program and events are framed up.

Visit the reunion website: <http://fsreunion2012.com> to sign up for the current news.

For more information, contact:  
Steve Ambrose  
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# Prince of Wales Island Road Improvements

By Marie Messing, Region Transportation Engineer

On March 30, 2011, Forest Service engineers met on Prince of Wales Island with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) to perform a Plan-in-Hand review of the North Prince of Wales (NPOW) Island Road Improvement project plans and specifications. The project being designed by Dowl Engineers, Inc., begins at the FH 44 Coffman Cove Junction and extends to just past the Sarkar Bridge. Once completed, the project will provide a safe, easily maintained two-lane, 24-foot-wide, paved road. Stream crossings will be upgraded to provide fish crossings. The design will include upgrades to meet current safety standards and improve the transportation opportunities for rural communities and access to forest resources.

This route is the primary transportation connection from Lab Bay, Whale Pass and Naukati to the rest of the communities on Prince of Wales, as well as to the Interisland Ferry Authority for access off the island and access to education and health care. The reconstruction will improve mobility by reducing travel times, cost in fuel, vehicle maintenance costs and improve the reliability of road maintenance. The roadway accesses the world class caves at El Capitan and a state subdivision near Naukati. Costs of goods for local residents will improve as transport costs decrease. The reconstruction will also improve the administration, restoration and protection of forest resources as well as the transport of forest resources to market.

The Plan-in-Hand review gives



Forest Service Engineers Jack Oien and Quentin Smith participate in the FH43 NPOW Island Road Improvement Project Plan in Hand Review. Photo by Brad Melocik, Dowl Engineers, Inc.

the designers and other participants an opportunity to verify data and check the design as developed in the office against the field conditions. This will help them identify any discrepancies and minimize conflicts and changes during construction.

The NPOW Island road is identified as a Forest Highway 43 by the “Tri-Agency,” an organization consisting of the Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration and the Alaska Department of Transportation. The Tri-Agency administers the Forest Highway program established in the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (Public Law 109-59; SAFETEA-LU) also known as “the highway bill.” The bill expired on September 2009 and Congress is presently working on a new bill.

The Forest Service contracted for

the design work with Forest Highway program funds. Since this section of the NPOW Island road is identified as a Regional Highway System in the 2004 ADOT&PF Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan, the State of Alaska has agreed to provide the Forest Service with the construction funding for the project. The project is expected to cost over \$40 million for construction and contract administration. The ADOT&PF will own and maintain the road as part of the State highway system after the construction is complete. This is a great benefit to the communities since Forest Service maintenance funds are not sufficient to keep the existing gravel road in a condition suitable for passenger vehicle comfort. Also, the Forest Service does not provide funding for snow removal on roads, so in the past the communities have had to maintain this road for their winter access.

The North Prince of Wales/El Capitan Road Improvements Project Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact was signed

Sept. 17, 2003. A Supplemental Information Report for the project was signed July 7, 2010. The design was completed on

June 10, 2011, and the project solicitation for construction is expected to be released in FedBizOpps July 20, 2011.

## Changing the Mind-set of a Newbie

By Shelly Berna, Information Receptionist, Sitka Ranger District

**G**o Green. Zero Waste. Carbon Footprint. Sustainable Living. These modern-day buzz words usually conjure up images of blue recycling bins and green twisting arrows. For me, and I suspect many others too, this type of lifestyle to “save the planet” had become an after-thought. That is until I moved to Sitka and joined the Forest Service.

The most you could expect out of me was a lame attempt at recycling soda cans. When I was recycling cans, I was on a rampage to make sure my household (actually, just my husband) was recycling cans too. My sustainable stamina wasn't exactly at peak performance and soon I stopped gathering aluminum. I also stopped hounding my household (husband) too.

When we moved to Sitka, I saw a community fully embracing the sustainable movement. And instead of guilt for not doing my part all these years, I actually felt my sustainable soul revive after hibernation. The recycling center, located across from the Alaska State Troopers Academy, houses multiple “bins” for recycling newspaper, cardboard, plastic, mixed paper, glass and, of course, aluminum cans. Every day I witness Sitka's citizens engaging in the sustainable lifestyle by utilizing this recycling facility. I wanted to change my lifestyle, I wanted to change my wasteful ways, and I wanted to do my part for this massive rock we live on. This change of attitude solidified when I started working for the Forest Service.



Many types of materials are collected at the Sitka Ranger District recycling room.

The Forest Service's background in sustainable operations and recreation is remarkable. However, the Forest Service's origins are even more spectacular. We started during the Gilded Age, at a time when mass industrialization, mass production with little regard to humankind and the environment ruled the day. I mean, at one point Whitetail deer were almost completely wiped out! If you are originally from Down South you know how hard that is to imagine.

But a few insightful people began to realize that a change was needed to sustain the land for future generations. To change the mind set of the Gilded Age citizen, one that consisted of mass giveaway of government land to populate the United States and rabid abuse of that land, laws had to be introduced.

So what is our excuse now during the age of information and

technology? Is it still easier to pass a law than it is to change a person's perception, especially when you are fighting against convenience? I hope not. As a newly minted member of the Forest Service, I've seen my coworkers partaking in the basics of sustainable operations and recreation. We take part in sustainability simply by the work we do.

Focus on making a sustainable lifestyle a change in lifestyle, much like eating more vegetables, and not simply a change of habit. Follow the model of the Forest Service and buy from green companies, reduce your consumption of energy and material things (in Southeast Alaska this should be very easy to accomplish), walk or bike instead of driving, repurpose items in creative ways instead of adding to the trash pile, and take part in community efforts to promote a sustainable lifestyle.

Reduce, reuse and recycle!

# iTREC! Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom

By Annette Heckart, Interpretive and Conservation Education Specialist, Chugach National Forest



Fourteen of 17 teachers from Seward to Nome who participated in the 2010-2011 season of iTREC!

**H**ow would you celebrate turning 100? Well, if you were the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), you would round up some of the most enthusiastic teachers that you could find and immerse them in a yearlong adventure in place-based education and service learning. That's the premise behind iTREC!—the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom. iTREC! is comprised of three teacher-training workshops aimed at providing the inspiration, knowledge and skills to transform classroom teaching into effective and exciting place-based education and service learning.

Launched as part of the centennial celebration of the historic Iditarod Trail, the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, Chugach National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and Alaska Geographic modeled iTREC! after the highly successful Trail to Every Classroom on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. During the pilot year of iTREC!, 17 teachers from communities spanning

the entire length of the 2,400-mile trail network were brought together to gain new expertise, ideas and resources for developing curriculum and teaching practices that foster students' understanding of their local landscape and community, and inspire them to get involved in long-term stewardship of the natural and cultural resources of the INHT. At the heart of this program is the belief that students who are immersed in the study of their own "place" are more eager to be involved in the stewardship of their communities and public lands.

The teachers—ranging from grades K to 12, and integrating such subject areas as ecology, journalism, civics, art, and physical education—worked on a variety of curriculum ideas that connect their students to the trail. Examples include: researching and writing books, visitor guides, interpretive signs and brochures on the INHT; assisting trail managers in trail maintenance and management issues associated with the trail; monitoring water

quality and raising awareness of the trail in their communities through public service announcements and community surveys. This focused investment in these teachers during the first year of this program, promises to engage some 1,000 students in sustained place-based service learning along the Iditarod and throughout Alaska.

Determining the effectiveness of the iTREC! program over the long term is a key goal of the program. Evaluation techniques and tools are being employed that will not only monitor the effectiveness of the program itself, but also allow the results to feed in to a national look at similar programs. The initial feedback gathered from teachers to date has been extremely positive.

One teacher said, "This workshop was a huge energizer for me. I was very excited to share ideas and to solve problems together. There was an amazing amount of synergistic energy that came from this gathering. I learned a lot and am excited to forge ahead on my trek."



Another teacher said, “The time and resources that were committed to this program really made me feel valued as a teacher. It was obvious that many partners were personally invested in the project and that really motivated me to be successful. I feel really well supported and that a lot of people are wanting me to succeed and willing to help me.”

The Chugach National Forest and its partners continue to offer high-quality professional development opportunities promoting place-based education and service-learning through iTREC!. As a result, the teachers and community partners who attended iTREC! are developing opportunities to help build lifelong stewards of Alaska’s public lands, natural resources and cultural heritage along the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

For more information, contact iTREC! Coordinator Annette Heckart, Chugach National Forest (907) 743-9502 or email at [aheckart@fs.fed.us](mailto:aheckart@fs.fed.us).

*Providing hands-on outdoor learning opportunities on the Iditarod National Historic Trail is an essential element of the iTREC! program.*



*Photo by H. Sperling.*

## Quiz: From the Archives

*By Teresa Haugh, Editor*

Oops...this quiz appears to have been too difficult! I asked you to identify the three gentlemen in the 1944 photo on the left, and it seems no one had the correct answer. However, Paul McIntosh gave it a good try, and Henry Hays correctly identified Chief Lyle F. Watts.

The answer, from left to right: Chief Lyle F. Watts, Asst. Chief C.M. Granger and head of the CCC in Alaska, Charles Burdick.

Let’s make the next quiz easier. Please identify the two gentlemen in the bottom photo (several decades newer). Helpful hint: One person is still working, and one is now retired.

And speaking of retired, don’t miss the announcement about the 2012 reunion, *Rendezvous in the Rockies*, on page 13.

To answer the quiz, please send an e-mail to [taugh@fs.fed.us](mailto:taugh@fs.fed.us), or a note to the address below. Thanks for participating...it’s always nice to know you’re reading.

*U.S. Forest Service  
Public Affairs Office  
P. O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK 99802*



# Federal Subsistence Program Part 1

By Steve Kessler, Regional Subsistence Program Leader

Most Alaskans have heard about the Federal Subsistence Program. They are familiar with its mission to provide a harvest preference by rural users of fish and wildlife and other resources on federal public lands and waters consistent with Title VIII of ANILCA. But does everyone know what the Federal Subsistence Program really entails? That the regional forester is delegated to act as the Secretary of Agriculture on the Subsistence Board, and that district rangers have authority to restrict hunting and fishing mid-season, or that the

program provides 50+ non-Federal jobs in rural communities?

This article is the first of a series called “Subsistence 101.” We will explore what subsistence is all about; learn the “bottom-up” rule-making process; understand the role of regional advisory councils; and explain in-season actions, permitting and enforcement. We will highlight the fisheries resource monitoring program and unique issues such as determining who is rural, describing customary trade, and the designated hunter allowance. If you have questions that you would like addressed in subsequent articles, please send them to Steve Kessler at [skessler@fs.fed.us](mailto:skessler@fs.fed.us).

## Subsistence 101

Customary and traditional hunting, fishing and gathering—also known as subsistence—is both the



*Regional Forest Beth Pendleton presents out-going Federal Subsistence Board Chairman Mike Fleagle with the traditional Alaska gold pan, recognizing the Chairman's four years of service to rural Alaskans.*

livelihood and a way of life for many Alaskan rural residents, and is protected by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Federal jurisdiction over subsistence hunting and fishing extends to over 60 percent of Alaska, including the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. In ANILCA, Congress found that continuation of the subsistence way of life by rural Alaskans was essential to their physical, economic, traditional, cultural and social existence. Hunting and fishing reflect vital relationships of people and land that are woven into the history, cultural identity,

and community life of rural Alaskans. As well, the lack of roads in Alaska means many rural people have no access to grocery stores, and even if they did, those foods are likely to be unaffordable.

Prior to late 1989, the State of Alaska had management authority over subsistence, sport, and commercial uses of Alaska's wildlife and fish resources. Eligibility for subsistence use under State of Alaska management, based on the concept of rural preference, was consistent with the federal requirement in Title VIII of ANILCA. In 1989, the Alaska State Supreme Court ruled that

the rural priority for subsistence use violated the Alaska State Constitution which calls for “equal access to fish & wildlife resources by all Alaskans.” Pending the state's resolution of its constitutional conflict, the federal government assumed the administration of the rural subsistence priority for fish and wildlife resources, but only on federal lands and waters.

The Agriculture and the Interior Secretaries are responsible for providing the rural subsistence priority under the provisions of ANILCA. The regional forester has been delegated authority to act for the Secretary of Agriculture for all program functions



**SUBSISTENCE:** The customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of non-edible by-products of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption; for barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption; and for customary trade.

related to subsistence management. The Federal Subsistence Board, made up of Alaska agency heads of the Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, and an appointed chair, establishes all subsistence hunting and fishing regulations. The Board is generally required to follow the recommendations of 10 regional advisory councils in decisions concerning the taking of fish and wildlife. The councils are distributed throughout Alaska and are made up of citizen representatives appointed by the Secretaries. The Southeast Council covers the Tongass National Forest and the Southcentral Council includes the Chugach National Forest.

The Alaska Region Subsistence Program represents a unique Forest Service role in wildlife and fisheries management. Normally, the Forest Service role in wildlife management



is largely confined to habitat management, with the states being responsible for population management. In Alaska, the Forest Service has a substantial role and workload in developing harvest regulations for subsistence wildlife and fish on all federal lands and waters within the State and

enforcing regulations on National Forest System lands.

For more information on the Federal Subsistence Program: <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm> or contact Steve Kessler, [skessler@fs.fed.us](mailto:skessler@fs.fed.us), 743-9461 or any of the Region's subsistence staff.

## Chugach National Forest Relay for Life

By William Claar, ISO Radio Lead, Alaska Region

Over the weekend of May 23 -24, 2011, a group of motivated employees from the Chugach National Forest Supervisor's Office in Anchorage took the opportunity to do their part in the ongoing fight against cancer. They participated in the annual Relay for Life of Chugiak-Eagle River over a 20-hour period.

I was proud to be this year's team captain of the Forest Service team which we named "The Smokin' Bears." Like myself, everyone involved with the team has been affected by cancer in some way, either personally or because of a loved one, friend or coworker. Our team raised over \$600, with a grand total of \$70,000 raised during this year's Relay for Life.

Chugach Budget Officer Kathy Schimmel served as co-captain. She took the first "survivor's lap" around the oval track at Gruening Middle School.

A big thank you goes out to all of the employees at the Supervisor's Office in Anchorage, with a special thanks to the following for their participation and support in making this a memorable event.

- Sally Gregory
- Linda Kelly
- Paula Smith
- Sharon Randall
- Mona Spargo
- Richard Turcic
- Rick Lesslie
- Rachel Lesslie



# First Annual Yakutat Tern Festival

By Teresa Hunt, Supervisory Resources Assistant, Yakutat Ranger District



Mount St. Elias Dancer. USFS photo.

The Yakutat Ranger District, Yakutat Chamber of Commerce, the National Park Service, and many community members worked together to plan and organize the first annual Yakutat Tern Festival June 2-5, 2011. This festival was wonderfully successful with over 200 participants, including 60 from out of town and over 50 kids aged 18 and under in the kids' education program.

Yakutat is a world class birding destination; its incredible habitat diversity translates into opportunities for birders to view over 200 species of birds, including over 100 nesting varieties and many rarities. Early June is a prime time to see terns up close and personal. Participants at the festival had the opportunity to attend field trips to areas like

the Ankau River, Ocean Cape, Harlequin Lake, and Strawberry Point to see a variety of shore birds and song birds.

There were many other activities including art shows, kids' events, and photo contests. Native culture was a key component of the festival. The Mount Saint Elias Dancers, led by Director Sheri Nelson, wore beautifully constructed regalia with intricate beading and weaving. They danced during the Friday evening dinner. The youth were taught Tlingit stories and songs, and even a few words in Tlingit.

Representatives from two raptor centers were available to answer ques-

tions and give presentations. The Juneau Raptor Center brought a barn owl and a gyrfalcon. The Alaska Raptor Center, based in Sitka, brought a peregrine falcon and a red-tailed hawk. Both centers held the attention of adults and youth alike. Spectators were able to experience all the intricate details of viewing raptors up close.

Anne Sutton, with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, taught youth about bird beak types and how beaks have adapted for different food sources. Stephanie Latzel taught kids how oil makes bird feathers lose their insulation qualities. The kids built birdhouses and made puppets.

The Yakutat High Class of 2015, aided by Jared Funderburk, hosted a fundraiser breakfast and puppet

show. High school students wrote the script, which was an entertaining comedy about Aleutian terns and arctic terns. Elementary students constructed the puppets and performed the puppet show.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood hosted a dinner on Saturday night at the ANB hall. Forest Service biologist Nate Catterson spoke about the Yakutat area terns and current Yakutat-based research efforts. Dr. Brad Andres, coauthor of *The Birds of Yakutat*, gave the keynote speech. He talked about the migration aspects of Yakutat's birds which link them to the rest of the world.

Tlingit artist Preston Singletary spoke about his career. He brought seven pieces of blown glass art work that were on display in the commons area at school. Amy Gulick, an award-winning nature photographer and writer, talked about her latest book, *Salmon in the Trees*. Gulick's photographs lined the school walls during the festival. Other talented artists were on hand as well. Fred Bemis brought his traditional, life-sized canoe as well as bentwood boxes. Lilly Johnson displayed her Tlingit artwork on conks and dried tree mushrooms, and fabric paintings she made on jackets, hooded sweatshirts, and T-shirts. Rhonda Coston displayed jewelry made from fresh water pearls, semi-precious stones, and sterling silver. Author Bert Adams, Sr. brought his books about Yakutat and Tlingit culture.

Penney James is credited for successfully organizing the exhibits, photo contest, and logo contest. All the photographs were exquisite. Mike Denaga and Sarah Newland were named winners of the publicly juried photo contest.

# Ben VanAlen Receives “Rise to the Future” Award

By Wendy Zirngibl, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest

**B**en VanAlen, Subsistence Fisheries Biologist on the Juneau and Yakutat Ranger Districts and Admiralty National Monument, has been nationally recognized this year for his outstanding work in Fisheries, Hydrology, and Soils. VanAlen received the “Rise to the Future” award for professional excellence in fisheries management, traveling to Washington, D.C., to accept the award from Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop. The award, which cites VanAlen’s “sustained high performance fostering technically sound management of the subsistence fisheries program in Alaska,” highlights the supreme importance of fisheries health on the Tongass National Forest while recognizing Ben’s skill at navigating the complex cultural dynamic inherent in Alaska’s subsistence way of life.



*Ben VanAlen, subsistence fisheries biologist on the Juneau and Yakutat Ranger Districts and Admiralty National Monument, is presented with the national “Rise to the Future” award by Deputy Chief Joel Holtrop.*

## Welcome Back, Ted Schenck

By Susan Howle, Forest Planner, Tongass National Forest

**I**n June, the Tongass National Forest welcomed Ted Schenck as the new staff officer for the Planning, Wildlife and Subsistence Staff Group. Schenck previously worked for the Supervisor’s Office in Sitka as a wildlife biologist. He returned to Alaska from the Southern Region where he served for five years as the national *Making Tracks* Coordinator. *Making Tracks* is a Forest Service partnership program with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf), state wildlife agencies, conservation groups and individuals. Its goal is to emphasize wild turkey management on national forests.

Schenck has also worked as a

wildlife ecologist planner in the Eastern Region and a wildlife planner and appeals coordinator in the Rocky Mountain Region.

Schenck said, “My tour as the Forest Service liaison with the NWTf has been a career highlight for a wildlife biologist. During that assignment, the Forest Service and NWTf partnership grew from doing small habitat projects to planning and accomplishing landscape scale ecosystem restoration projects using expanded partnerships, extensive collaboration, and large scale planning.” During Schenck’s tour, the number of cooperatively-funded biologists grew from four to 10.

“NWTf has grown to be a national leader in helping the field staff of the Forest Service envision, establish and implement projects using stewardship agreements,” said Schenck.

Schenck particularly enjoyed working with the motivated and enthusiastic members and staff of the NWTf to plan and host conservation education and outreach activities for youth, women and handicapped sportsmen. He said, “Seeing the smiles on the faces of successful first-time outdoor recreationists is very rewarding to me.”

Schenck and his wife Paulette are looking forward to renewing old friendships in Ketchikan.

# We're Way Ahead in the Safety Journey

By William Moulton, Safety Officer, Tongass National Forest

Associate Chief Mary Wagner asked the National Leadership Council in a June 3 letter to, “Train employees—and especially supervisors—in the principles of Human Performance Improvement.” Human Performance Improvement (HPI) is the fourth in a series of strategic investments for safety the NLC intends to make as part of our Safety Journey. But, here in R10, we are already way ahead of the rest of the Forest Service! Several units on the Tongass and the RO hosted “Human Performance Improvement Fundamentals” facilitated by Forest Service employees Ivan Pupilidy and Ben Iverson.

The Tongass National Forest Leadership Team hosted an HPI course during a leadership team meeting in October 2010. As a result of this session, Ivan and Ben were invited back to introduce the concepts of the course to all Tongass personnel. The Human Performance Team presented HPI, from May 2-10, at the Juneau Ranger District, Ketchikan, Petersburg Ranger District Offices (Wrangell employees boated over to join the festivities) and at the Regional Office. Despite significant pressures to complete project work and budget planning, personnel were receptive to the program. Associate Chief Wagner says “People’s thinking about safety is being challenged and they are genuinely excited about the possibility of radically improved safety outcomes.”

This course strove to develop accident prevention through learning and to improve our organizational response to events. They addressed the concept of “bad apples” in the world of human error. Do they truly exist? Can anyone look back on the past 24 hours and honestly believe that they performed every task perfectly, followed every thought to completion, been vigilant every moment of the day, or made every decision to arrive at the best outcome? It is progressively becoming clear to social science, that the people who make the most “errors” (a judgment with



*“...thinking about safety is being challenged...”*

Associate Chief Mary Wagner



*Ben Iverson, Human Performance Specialist, find time to enjoy the outdoors during his trip to Alaska. Photo by Kim Saner.*

hindsight bias by people outside the tunnel (Dekker, 2006)) are those who are expected to take the most risks by the organization. It is now widely recognized that the people doing the work actively create safety, it is not a latent property of any system. Yet when there is a “failure” it is these people who are made into the scapegoats and punished as examples for their undesired behavior. Sometimes it seems like we design our systems and procedures, just so people will “fail.”

This course pointed out that:

- We are humans interacting in a complex world, with limitless variability.
- There is no perfection in our lives, our work, or our interactions with others.
- We all “miss the mark” on occasion but have good intentions when it comes to safety.
- How people actively create safety every day.

Several participants pointed out that these sessions were a good opportunity to “increase dialogue between management and field” hence “increasing trust in the field workers.”

Ivan Pupilidy is a Human Performance Specialist for the Forest Service. Starting in 1984 Ivan worked as a mine geologist and exploration geophysicist, then joined the Coast Guard and earned his wings as a naval aviator in 1987.

Following a successful 10-year career with the Coast Guard, Ivan traded water for fire and became a Lead Plane Pilot for the U.S. Forest Service. Flying low-level over forest fires across the United States, Ivan was drawn to aviation safety as a regional aviation safety manager.



# International Youth Eco Forum 2011

By Gerhard Sells, Alaska Delegate, International Youth Forum

Climate change can be, and is, a very real and pressing issue for countries worldwide. One way to slow the current escalating process of global warming is to educate the world's youth to be environmentally aware and conservation minded.

In May 2011, Alaska was host to a climate awareness program known as the International Youth Eco Forum. The YEF program was organized in cooperation with the Chugach National Forest, Alaska Geographic and the University of Alaska Anchorage. It was also staffed and coordinated by several members from the Alaska Youth for Environmental Action.

This forum has taken place in a different country in the northern hemisphere each year for the past 10 years. The program promotes greater collaboration among youth, improves youth civic engagement and moves them to environmental action. The forum offers opportunities for young adults to learn about climate change and the environment and to interact with youth from other countries.

The 2011 YEF included students from different regions in China, Russia, Canada, and Alaska. Activities included: classes and lectures hosted by the local government and environmental organizations; presentations given by students on environmental, economical and cultural issues in their countries; and participating in field trips.

During the forum, held near the UAA campus, the class learned about Alaska's unique role as an international center for the study of climate change. On May 3, students took part in a field trip to Whittier, where they had the opportunity to take a boat

tour of parts of Prince William Sound and learn more about Alaska's local ecosystems and environment.

On the way to Whittier, the class visited the Begich, Boggs' Visitor Center where they had the chance to meet with members of the Forest Service who discussed the uses of the Chugach National Forest as well as the effects of climate change within Alaska and the Chugach.

During the cruise, much time was devoted to teaching the class about the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill disaster of 1989. Some 32,000 people were directly affected by the oil spill and around six times as many indirectly. About 11 million gallons of oil was spilled into the Sound,<sup>1</sup> killing or affecting countless plants and animals. The issue of very poor oil cleanup methods, insufficient oil extraction tools, and overall mismanagement of the spill was also addressed during the tour.

From May 4-7, the forum was part of a UAA scientific symposium "Classrooms for Climate" where participating institutions and agencies, related to and affected by climate change, were able to come together to discuss and make plans for these environmental changes. (For more on the symposium, visit [www.uaa.alaska.edu](http://www.uaa.alaska.edu)).

Over the course of the week and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.evostc.state.ak.us/facts/qanda.cfm>



Gerhard Sells helps control weeds on Spencer Bench Trail. Photo by U.S. Forest Service.

especially during the symposium, the YEF had the opportunity to meet with well known politicians, government workers and environmental activists.

The YEF was able to talk with Chugach Forest Supervisor Terri Marceron, who explained to the class the purpose of the Chugach Children's Forest. The Children's Forest is a program formed to help expose and educate Alaska's young generations in environmental matters and open doors to new internships and other opportunities within the Park Service and Forest Service.

During the symposium, students attended a lecture at UAA with Majora Carter, an economic consultant and environmental justice advocate from New York City. Carter is involved in the development of "green"

house buildings, an environmentally savvy home/public building construction plan involving the installation of garden roofs on public and private dwellings and promoting the use of recyclable materials in housing construction and general.

Residents from community organizations in Prince William Sound talked about the part that they, as

a united group of people who have faced environmental disasters such as the '89 oil spill, play in the prevention of climate change. From the inspection of oil tankers, their cargo, and other means of oil transportation to insure their safe conduct to areas of need, to protecting native plants and animals, these native corporations and organizations try to pre-

serve the unique beauty of Alaska for future generations to come.

The International Youth Eco Forum is one of a number of programs that allow for young men and women from many different countries to come together and learn about the finely woven fabric of our biosphere. This is a wonderful program and I am proud to have been a part of it.

## Girl Scout Encampment 2011

By Gerhard Sells, Alaska Delegate, International Youth Forum

June 3-4, 2011, several employees from the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service attended the 2011 Girl Scout Encampment.

The encampment takes place biannually at the state fairgrounds in Palmer and gives local Girl Scouts a chance to meet and interact with other scouts from across Alaska. They also have the opportunity to participate in fun activities and informative hands-on work shops including rock climbing, races, patch and badge courses, craft exchanges, and much more.

Our coalition was formed to run a workshop booth at the event entitled "Invading Alaska." The workshop focused on educating the scouts about the infiltration of non-native and invasive species into our local ecosystems. Much emphasis was put on describing biodiversity, ecosystem structures and how easily they can be ruptured and destroyed by the introduction of new species.

To help give the scouts an idea of how these invasions of nonnative species can affect the collaboration



Gerhard Sells with Bonnie Million, National Park Service and Denny Lassuy, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

structure between local species, we had a few games for them to play. One, titled the "Web of Life," involving several girls impersonating some native Alaskan species and a ball of string, gave a good impression of what can happen to an ecosystem structure after infiltration.

Another game showed beautifully how certain plant species (i.e., Purple Loose Strife and Reed Canary Grass) can choke up waterways and prevent fish from swimming up river, where bears were waiting to consume them. The games were very effective at bringing home to the scouts the reasons why we should be concerned about non-native species "invading Alaska."

To help familiarize the girls with several of Alaska's more common invasive species, we adopted invasive weed nicknames like "Bull-thistle," "Bird Vetch," and the very unbecoming "Garlic Mustard."

We took turns describing and explaining to the classes the kinds of non-native plants and animals they might find (and soon) in Alaska. We described the effects that invasive plants can have on our ecosystems and the methods that the

federal government utilizes to remove them. We loved talking with the scouts about it all and had fun describing our own personal recollections and ordeals that we experienced while working in Alaska's parks and forests.

All those who worked at Encampment 2011 had a great time being a part of our workshop and the event. The girls enjoyed themselves and left the event more aware of our state's environmental standing, with an arsenal of non-native species names (I know this to be a fact due to many of them calling me "Garlic Mustard" for the rest of the event), and a better understanding of biodiversity and ecosystems.

# Classrooms for Climate

By Sara Boario, Public Affairs & Partnerships Staff Officer, Chugach National Forest  
Photos courtesy of University of Alaska Anchorage



Keynote Speaker Majora Carter educated and inspired symposium attendees.

This past May, over 250 participants gathered in Anchorage to attend *Classrooms for Climate: A Symposium on the Changing Chugach, Northern Ecosystems, and the Implications for Science & Society*.

The conference, co-hosted by the University of Alaska Anchorage and Chugach National Forest, was a first-step in bringing together partners in climate inquiry, education and management from across Southcentral Alaska.

Covering everything from the role of glaciers in sea level rise to the migration of tree species as a result of a warming climate, scientists gave participants a thorough understanding of climate science and ecology as well as data and tools for monitoring and modeling changes. Researchers also discussed the connections between healthy ecosystems and healthy

economies through the examples of climate effects on communities, recreation, and human health.

Participants also explored options to adapt to changes in both ecosystems and human systems through historical perspectives

from Alaska's indigenous populations and current-day examples of how everyday people are taking on these challenges and crafting solutions. A critical perspective on everyday action was provided by keynote speaker Majora Carter, who drew a large public audience to learn more about her experience as the founder of Sustainable South Bronx and host of the environmental-themed public radio series, *The Promised Land*.

Several youth events were developed in coordination with the conference including a Green Jobs Forum for local youth, and the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Eco-Forum, which assembled approximately 50 youth from across the circumpolar north to explore research and questions concerning climate change and forested landscapes. At the end of their week, the youth presented a declaration for action to leaders from the Forest and University.



Youth attending Classroom for Climate Change present a youth declaration they developed during the event.



Outgoing UAA Chancellor Fran Ulmer and Chugach Forest Supervisor Terri Marceron open the Symposium



Youth Eco-Forum Delegation from the Sakhar Republic, Russia, pose in traditional clothing.

The conference, a signature event for the International Year of Forests, was made possible by a number of committed partners, including the Alaska Coastal Rainforest Center, Alaska Geographic, Institute of the

North, Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, and the Northern Forum. Audio from featured speakers as well as the Youth Declaration can be found on the Chugach website at <http://fs.usda.gov/goto/chugach/climate>.

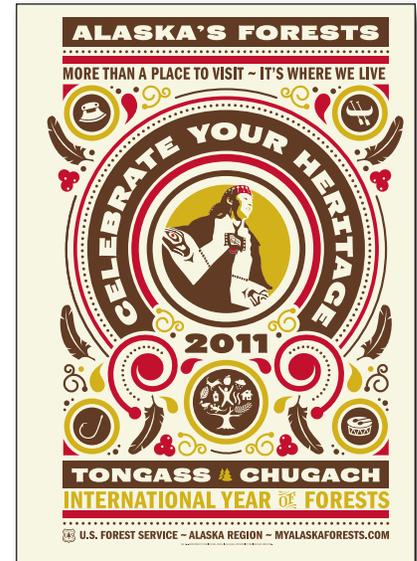
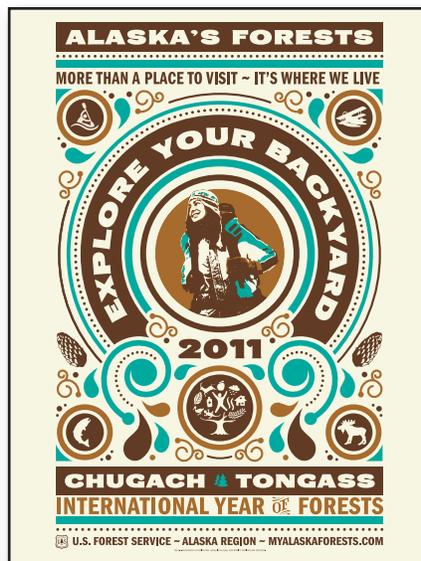
## Celebrating International Year of Forests

By Wendy Zirngibl, Public Affairs Specialist, Tongass National Forest

Mid-July marks the release of the final International Year of Forests poster (see back cover). Fourth in a collectible series, the design in rich, earthy greens and browns is anchored by a man peering through binoculars and conveys the theme, *Find Your*

*Inspiration*. Unique to the Alaska Region, all of the posters are available at Forest Service offices only in Alaska. But the popularity of the design is not limited to the region: by request, staffers have mailed these posters across the country, while international visitors to the Tongass

and Chugach national forests have happily carried them as souvenirs across the world to homes thousands of miles away. Now all four posters are available, free of charge, to those who call Alaska's forests home as well as the many and varied guests to our beautiful backyard.



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